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LETTERS

ON

LITERATURE

BY

PHOTIUS, JUNIOR.

i.e. W. Sherlock

I said, I also will show my opinion.

BOOK OF JOB.

A man must serve his time to ev'ry trade,
Save Censure—Critics all are ready made.

LORD BYRON.

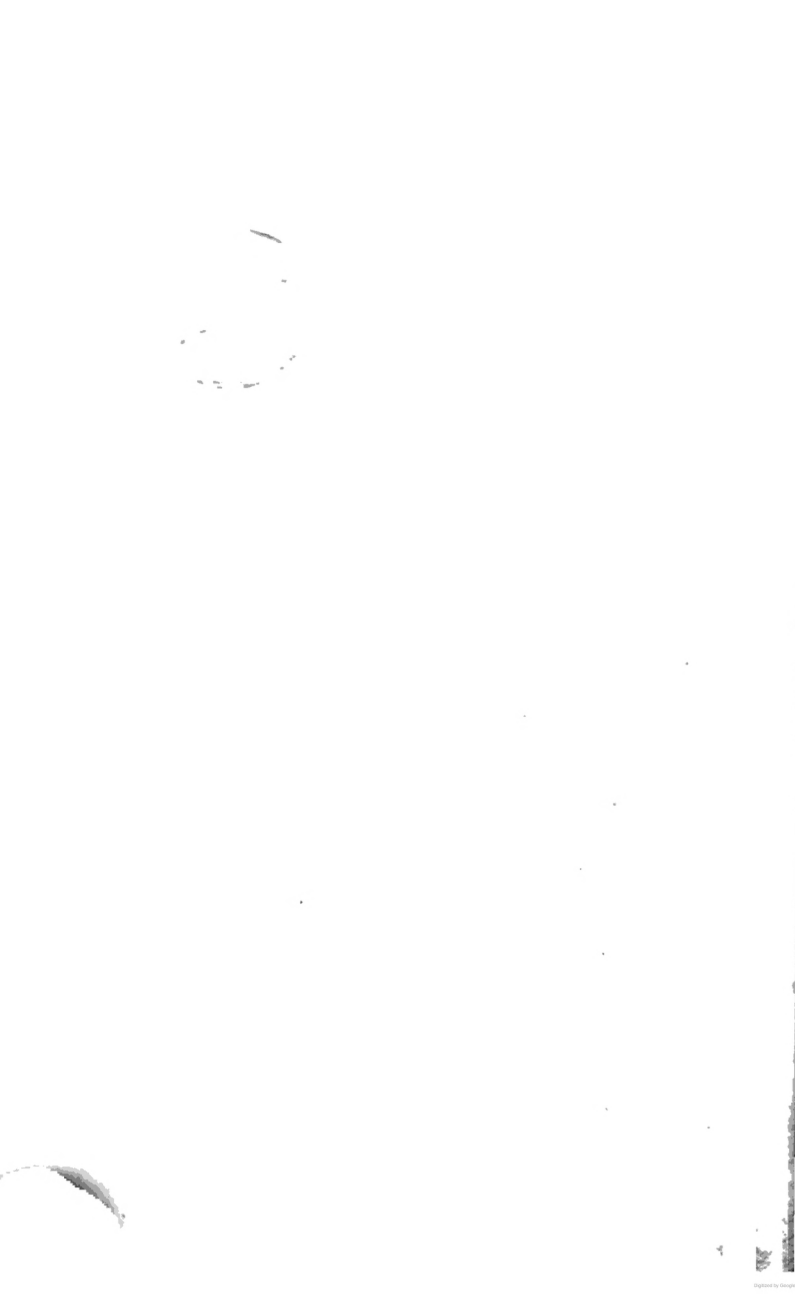
VOLUME I.

BRUSSELS:

PRINTED BY ADOLPHE WAHLEN,

PRINTER AND BOOKSELLER TO THE COURT.

—
1836.



P R E F A C E.

THE succeeding pages contain a digest of miscellaneous reading pursued during ten years by a person of retired and sedentary habits. The practice of writing commentaries, which has expanded into so bulky a volume, was first resorted to in aid of a weak memory and a truant attention—the former defect perhaps mainly attributable to the latter. That the proposed remedy has been effectual, the constantly recurring avowals of incompetency to pronounce opinions by reason of negligent perusal, too plainly disprove : that the practice has operated as a great palliative to an evil by which reading, instead of “ making a full man,* ” has a directly opposite tendency, that of rendering him “ bird-witted,” † is, however, undeniable. The consciousness of a self-imposed accountableness has often recalled the mind of the writer to its task, when it was absent in a maze of distracting thoughts that required the process of perusal merely mechanical. It is to recommend, as far as the limited sphere of his own advice and example may reach, a habit whose benefit the writer has himself experienced, that these notices are published. To excuse their unequal execution and their references to matters merely personal, the epistolary form

* Lord Bacon.

† *Id.*

has been adopted, but in fact they have been unseen by any eye besides the writer's, up to the hour of their going to press. It is not expected that the sentiments of an unknown critic upon known works will meet with much favour or attention. It is, however, deemed possible that a specimen of a practice requiring time and trouble in a degree inconceivably small compared with its utility, may direct some person upon the same track, whose abilities may supply that still existing desideratum—a full, fair, and *bond fide* literary review—a performance in which the merit of an author will not be weighed in the scale of his politics, nor the title of a popular production made a peg to hang a dissertation upon, in which, like Ovid's overdressed young lady, the author professed to be reviewed will form the smallest part of himself. Well, indeed, has one of the most acute writers of the present age observed that “modern criticism discloses that which it would fain conceal, but conceals that which it professes to disclose; it is, therefore, read by the discerning, not to discover the merits of an author, but the motives of his critic.” *

* Lacon. N° DXLIV.

Dublin, September 13, 1825.

MY DEAR C.

I have sought to excuse the wide chasms that have lately intervened between my letters, by the stupidity of this place and the monotony of my life. You, however, overrule the plea, and add the complimentary assurance that you would derive more pleasure from an account of that occupation which beguiles my solitary hours, than from the most abundant harvest of scandal and gossip which the most diligent reaper could furnish. Since such is your pleasure, you shall have no more complaints to make of my too free use of the figure of *Siopesis*. I shall give you a full and candid opinion of all the literary works I meet with, whose intrinsic merits or the popularity of their authors may render them worthy of your attention. Without further exordium I shall commence with one I have just read, namely the Essays of the celebrated historian and metaphysician, David Hume.

HUME'S ESSAYS.

Quand j'ai vu qu'il doutait de tout, j'ai conclu que j'en savais autant que lui, et que je n'avais besoin de personne pour être ignorant. *Candide.*

ACCORDING to Mr. Hume, scepticism is of two kinds : First, that which precedes our acquisition of knowledge, and which consists in bringing our minds to the investigation of truth, quite evacuated of all preconceived opinions, and with a cautious diffidence and distrust of such as we are proceeding to examine. This sort of scepticism was very largely entertained by Mr. Hume himself, and

constitutes perhaps his main attraction as a moral philosopher. In entering with him upon the discovery of truth, we at once feel ourselves concerned with a man heartily engaged in the same pursuit; one who seeks to impose no system; who, doubting and questioning every thing, is of no sect or party; has no purpose to serve in the recommendation of one theory, or the rejection of another; who, instead of assuming the teacher, enlists himself with us as a fellow-student, remounts to first principles; examines, objects, compares and balances, to the utmost of our wishes, and who, far from demanding concession, will not even accept it. Our self-love is so gratified by this species of fraternization, that we feel the most perfect willingness to yield our admiration to the great acuteness of mind and charm of style with which it is conjoined.

The other species of scepticism, of which Mr. Hume is a no less signal example, is of a directly opposite character, so far at least as its effects, which are to disappoint and humble us, are concerned. It is that uncertainty which results from the abstrusest examination of a question: from the confliction and counterpoise of so many arguments that we can neither confidently adopt or reject almost any hypothesis, and which compels us to either of those two painful admissions—that we have engaged in a task above our individual power, or else that we have pushed our researches beyond the limits which seem to have been immutably assigned to human inquiry. This sort of scepticism it is which constitutes the defect and danger of Mr. Hume's moral writings. Hence it is that we find a workman so expert in demolishing the fabrics of others, utterly unable to rear one of his own; and that after wandering with him through the shapeless masses of rubbish to which he has reduced all the structures he encounters on his way, we are led back by him to our starting place, without a shelter for our own heads amid the widely spread desolation which he has made. If Horace's alternative of either adopting the rules of our teachers, or substituting better of our own, were to have been compulsory, Mr. Hume must never have entered the controversial lists, and that disappointment and humiliation which his readers must all experience, had been prevented.

It is time, however, to give an account of some of Mr. Hume's theories, or rather of his materials for theories.

The first part of the Essays is chiefly political. Upon the great

question of resistance in the subject to the will of the ruler, he agrees with the rest of the constitutional writers, that there is a boundary beyond which acquiescence should not go, and a point at which resistance should commence, but like them, he discreetly forbears to give anything like a rule for their ascertainment.

The question as to the Hanoverian and Stuart successions is thus commercially disposed of :—To the debit of the Hanoverian line is placed their foreign possessions and the infraction they caused of the rules of succession. To the credit of their account appears the popery of the Stuarts and their claim to an indefeasible title. The reader is left to strike the balance for himself.

The chief peculiarity, as it strikes me, in Mr. Hume's metaphysics,—and it is remarkable as one of the few instances where he affirms or denies positively,—is his decided rejection of the doctrine of freewill, or in other words, his being a necessitarian. He argues thus :—We perceive no necessary connexion between cause and effect in material substances. All we know is that our experience warrants us in expecting similar consequences from similar antecedents at all times and under all circumstances. The same experience, he contends, enables us with equal certainty to infer human motives from human conduct, and conversely, and that thus the necessary connexion is as well established in moral as in physical relations.

There is a very long and elaborate chapter upon human passions, which I profess my utter inability to understand, although I have read it again and again—applied the instances to the reasonings, and turned the matter over and over in my mind. I shall therefore say no more of it.

The most interesting, as it is the most important part of these Essays, is that concerning religion, and with Hume's opinions upon that question, as well as I have been able to collect and condense them, I shall conclude this notice.

Hume was not an Atheist. He thinks the universe bears evidence of an intelligent creator ; but he will not allow any infinite attributes to this creator. All we can affirm of him (he says) is, that he made the universe. Whether he had power to do anything greater is no more inferrible from what we know, than that a weight of which we are ignorant, must be of five pounds because we find it able to raise ten ounces. Miracles he explodes *in toto*, and this

is one of his few dogmas. His reasoning is, that a miracle being contrary to nature carries its contradiction upon its very face :—to corroborate it we have more or less of human testimony ;—against this testimony we have our own experience *, necessarily paramount to all testimony, and therefore we are compelled by the preponderance of evidence to an unqualified rejection.

This subject is dismissed and the work concluded by an avowal of inextricable perplexity, and in this comfortable state he leaves his disciples, with the following valediction :

“ The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject. But such is the frailty of human reason, and such the irresistible contagion of opinion, that even this deliberate doubt could scarcely be upheld; did we not enlarge our view, and opposing one species of superstition to another, set them a-quarrelling, while we ourselves, during their fury and contention, happily make our escape, into the calm, though obscure, regions of philosophy.”

BABYLON THE GREAT.

Dublin, Sept. 20, 1825.

To begin with censure : nothing can be more provokingly incongruous and absurd than the title of this book. It is intended for a description of modern London, of which every thing is called by its plain English name, except the place itself. There is no parallelism attempted, no covert satire beneath the surface which could seek the shelter of a borrowed name, or vindicate the assumption of the present from the charge of gratuitous mystification.

There is some light, pleasant sketching in the body of this collection of dissertations, as I may call it; but nothing that indicates a

* Paley admirably exposes the fallacy in this reasoning arising from confounding what is *contrary* to experience with what is *not according to* experience. See also Channing's Dudleian Lecture.

deep knowledge of that of which London is a modification, or indeed a very thorough acquaintance with the modification itself. The principal debaters in the House of Commons are well described, and the mechanism of the press especially so. These two circumstances give a great colour to the opinion that the writer is connected with the public journals, and the knack he has of saying something flashy and smart upon commonplace ideas tends to strengthen the opinion.

Upon the whole, "Babylon the Great" contains a great preponderance of those things which *nec ignorantī nocent, nec scientem juvant*. It is a work, though much more ambitious, far inferior to that of Mr. Archenholz, and it is not to be regretted if its cool reception prevent (as the opposite, we are told, will promote) its dilatation into more volumes.

FOREIGN SCENES,

BY J. HOWISON.

Dublin, Sept. 28, 1825.

THERE is a great deal to commend and something to censure in this book, of which the commendable parts would bear a much greater proportion to the censurable ones, if it had been not much more than one half as long; for it is the second or accessory volume which is most open to animadversion, as being heavy and uninteresting in its matter, and elaborate and artificial in its style. Mr. Howison, the author, gives no detailed or consecutive account of his travels, but breaks his volumes into dissertations upon those characteristics of tropical scenery, manners and institutions, which he considers best worth recording. To these is added a dramatic story, with which the work concludes, but which has no reference either to the preceding matter or to the author himself, who may have heard, read, or dreamed it, for anything the reader can tell. It is nevertheless written with great power, and is entitled "the Delinquent."

Mr. Howison's strength lies in description emphatically so called,

by which I understand the delineation of scenery and the effects of the phenomena of nature upon the mind; and also in presenting a lively representation of the various discomforts inseparable from tropical residence and travelling, acting upon a constitution of great susceptibility. There is indeed something rather atrabilious in the general tenor of his remarks, which lead one to suspect that he has lived long enough near the equator to have got his liver somewhat impaired. Whether the cause be within himself, or really existent in his subject, he certainly gives a most uninviting picture of East and West India existence. The sultry climate, with its debilitating agency on the human frame and faculties; the liability to sudden death consequent upon the endemic diseases, and the little emotion that, from its frequency, that consummation excites even among the closest intimates of the victim; the most objectionable constitution of society, partly arising from this same ultra-precariousness of life, engendering selfishness and unconcern about acquaintances, and partly from the unintellectual character of the colonists, sent out at an age when their education could not have been even well begun, and condemned besides to dulness and insipidity of conversation by the uneventful uniformity with which the business of the government and of individuals is carried on; all these circumstances form a conjunction of repulsions, which, if they be unexaggerated, should deter all British, not in circumstances actually desperate at home, from ever seeking advancement in those climes. The possibility of making a rapid fortune too, except by corrupt methods, is denied, and the vulgar idea as to Oriental luxuries, I think, successfully refuted, by showing that what usually obtains the name is but a mere substitution (and being by artificial means, necessarily an inadequate one), for those bounties of nature, which we of Northern latitudes possess too abundantly either to enjoy or remark. Notwithstanding all those admissions to the disfavour of the country, and certainly nothing of countervailing advantages set forth, there is, in the chapter upon life in India, a seeming confiction of assertion which it is not always easy to reconcile with consistency, and which would be a little puzzling, only that the unfavourable side of the account is so much better vouched by facts and seems so much more plainly to be the transcript of the writer's own feelings.

There is a chapter upon a ruined military station and a purely

imaginary account of the extinct inmates of the different habitations, terribly out of place in a work professing to treat merely of realities, and forming the great blemish of the whole.

The style and diction is all-through suitable to the matter : it is clear, flowing and expressive when employed upon subjects of relevancy ; and cumbrous and redundant in those parts which are excrescences.

I transcribe a most curious account of a physical phænomenon, illustrating to what a degree the corporeal and mental functions may be dissevered to re-unite again, and forming something like a philosophical argument for the immortality of the soul.

The author, after minutely describing a state of total inability to make bodily exertion, while he preserved his consciousness, occasioned by sleeping in a confined ship-cabin almost filled with packages of tobacco, thus goes on :—

“I should not have been so particular in mentioning these circumstances, had I not heard something analogous to them from a German oculist whom I met with in Havana. This old man, who was altogether a very singular character, told me that the digitalis or foxglove, the bella-donna or nightshade, and several other plants of a similar kind, possessed peculiar qualities, which were not generally known even by the medical profession. When administered, he said, in a certain way, they could be made to act so powerfully and directly as sedatives, as to destroy all sensibility and voluntary motion, without affecting the animal life, or impeding its necessary and healthy actions and functions ; but with this remarkable peculiarity, that the mind or soul did not participate in the comatoseness which affected its mortal tenement, but was more than usually active and excursive. On these occasions, however, the individual to whom it belonged had no perception of anything of the kind. His body enjoyed an animal existence, as it were, without sensation, and nothing more. But when the effect of the narcotic was dispelled either by counter-agents or by time, he recovered from his lethargy, and active life, memory, will, and intelligence returned, with a perfect knowledge of all the operations and employment which his mind had gone through, from the moment of his losing his perceptions to that of his reviving and their being restored.

“The German explained all this in the following way :—Life and the soul, he said, are separate essences, though intimately connected together, and when the powers of the former have been enfeebled to a certain degree, the latter disengages itself from the body, and continues its agency unlimited and unembarrassed by the incumbrance of corporeal matter. However, on the animal functions beginning to recover their natural vigour, their immortal inmate is attracted back by a peculiar sympathy to its earthly tenement, and the human being, which they jointly compose, awakes to intelligence, and suddenly recollects all the ideas that have passed through his mind during the period of his suspended animation. These my friend described as often being vivid, original, and marvellous beyond description, and such as entirely exceeded the conceptions of man in his natural state of existence. After descanting a considerable time upon the subject, he related the following story in illustration of it.—” *Vol. 1. P. 282, 3, 4.*

PALEY'S EVIDENCES

OF CHRISTIANITY.

Dublin, Sept. 1825.

THE advocate is worthy of his cause, and language can convey no higher praise. This great writer, confiding in the strength of his case and in his own prowess, has fairly put to issue the mighty question so tremendously involving all the interests of the world, and has, I think, triumphantly established that view of it which justifies our faith, our hopes, our fears, and our veneration and love of God.

In what may be termed his statement, Doctor Paley has not given much from himself : the chain of reasoning is chiefly taken from a voluminous work of Doctor Lardner, of which the first part of the “Evidences” may thus be considered an abridgment. But this, far from derogating from the merits of Doctor Paley, supplies

perhaps the strongest evidence both of his candour and his ingenuity. He makes use of the arguments of others freely and with full acknowledgment when they suit his purpose, and surely there are few tasks more arduous to human capacity than that judicious pruning which, while it leaves the productive branches untouched, strengthens and embellishes them by the removal of redundancies.

It is however in what (by the comparison irresistibly forced upon me) may be called *the speech to evidence*, that the genius of the author, exalted by the sublime themes it has been discussing, and elated by the consciousness of the near accomplishment of its victorious career, opens upon us in the plenitude of its power. As a model of argument and rhetoric combined, I should suppose that the two last chapters, containing a synopsis of the entire work and the peroration, have reached a transcendancy beyond which human powers cannot rise, and that on closing the book, the most sceptical, if he be intelligent and candid, must admit his conviction that the historians of Christ *would not* deceive, and *could not* be mistaken; and therefore that the religion he founded is demonstrated.

In a work of this description, where the chain of reasoning commences at the first page and continues uninterruptedly to the last, it is difficult to know where to begin a quotation and where to leave it off. There are innumerable passages of greater ingenuity of thought and vigour of language than the one I transcribe; but I give it a preference as containing the most of the general scope of the disquisition in the fewest number of words :

“ The truth of Christianity depends upon its leading facts and upon them alone. Now of these facts we have evidence which ought to satisfy us, at least until it appear that mankind have ever been deceived by the same. We have some uncontested and incontestable points, to which the history of the human species has nothing similar to offer. A Jewish peasant changed the religion of the world, and that, without force, without power, without support; without one natural source or circumstance of attraction, influence, or success. Such a thing hath not happened in any other instance. The companions of this Person, after he himself had been put to death for his attempt, asserted his supernatural character, founded upon his supernatural operations; and, in testimony of the truth of their assertions, *i. e.* in conse-

quence of their own belief of that truth, and in order to communicate the knowledge of it to others, voluntarily entered upon lives of toil and hardship, and with a full experience of their danger, committed themselves to the last extremities of persecution. This hath not a parallel. More particularly, a very few days after this Person had been publicly executed, and in the very city in which he was buried, these his companions declared with one voice that his body was restored to life; that they had seen him, handled him, eat with him, conversed with him, and, in pursuance of their persuasion of the truth of what they told, preached his Religion, with this strange fact as the foundation of it, in the face of those who had killed him, who were armed with the power of the country, and necessarily and naturally disposed to treat his followers as they had treated himself; and having done this upon the spot where the event took place, carried the intelligence of it abroad, in despite of difficulties and opposition, and where the nature of their errand gave them nothing to expect but derision, insult, and outrage. — This is without example. These three facts, I think, are certain, and would have been nearly so; if the Gospels had never been written. The Christian story, as to these points, hath never varied. No other hath been set up against it. Every letter, every discourse, every controversy, amongst the followers of the Religion; every book written by them, from the age of its commencement to the present time, in every part of the world in which it hath been professed, and every sect into which it hath been divided, (and we have letters and discourses written by contemporaries, by witnesses of the transaction, by persons themselves bearing a share in it, and other writings following that age in regular succession,) *concur* in representing these facts in this manner. A religion, which now possesses the greatest part of the civilized world, unquestionably sprang up at Jerusalem at this time. Some account must be given of its origin; some cause assigned for its rise. All the accounts of this origin, all the explications of this cause, whether taken from the writings of the early followers of the Religion (in which, and in which perhaps alone, it could be expected that they would be distinctly unfolded,) or from occasional notices in other writings of that or the adjoining age, either expressly allege the facts above stated as the means by which the

Religion was set up, or advert to its commencement in a manner which agrees with the supposition of these facts being true, and which testifies their operation and effects."

Vol. 2. P. 376-7-8-9.

DALLAS'S RECOLLECTIONS

OF LORD BYRON.

Dublin, September, 1825.

THE sensitiveness of Mrs. Leigh and Mr. Hobhouse, backed by the injunction of Lord Eldon, and aided by the egotism of Mr. Dallas, has made this a very indifferent and most disappointing book. Although Mr. Dallas were restrained from publishing the text of Lord Byron's letters, there was nothing to prevent him giving their spirit and substance; but here we have the mere setting without the gems: a text of Mr. Dallas's, and most voluminous extracts from his own correspondence, much more perhaps than would have been necessary to introduce and elucidate Lord Byron's, but which apart from it are insufferably tedious and utterly valueless. Indeed Mr. Dallas has completely merged his hero in himself, and appears to have quite forgotten that though he could not say too much of the one, he could not be too concise respecting the other; and consequently he plays the Mentor so indefatigably—labours so eagerly to prove the ascendancy he possessed over Lord Byron's mind, as long as that was not hardened against virtuous impressions, and so magnifies himself to the diminution of his nominal friend, that he quite outrages the patience of the reader and convinces him that the work ought to have been, in fairness, entitled, "Dallas's eulogium upon himself and his own conduct, particularly in reference to Lord Byron," or something to that effect. His present title is a fraudulent trick to refuge his own senile vanity under the name of a great though misguided man, and his son and editor has done an act as little meritorious towards the public as towards his parent's memory, in effectuating the dishonest project.

The style is neither good enough nor bad enough to merit a very large specimen. I select that part which describes Lord Byron in one of the most remarkable scenes of his life, and which follows the relation of it by some well-merited animadversions upon those to whom the care of his infancy and youth was confided.

“The satire was published about the middle of March, previous to which he took his seat in the House of Lords, on the 15th of the same month. On that day, passing down St. James's-street, but with no intention of calling, I saw his chariot at his door, and went in. His countenance, paler than usual, showed that his mind was agitated, and that he was thinking of the nobleman to whom he had once looked for a hand and countenance in his introduction to the House. He said to me—‘I am glad you happened to come in; I am going to take my seat, perhaps you will go with me.’ I expressed my readiness to attend him; while at the same time I concealed the shock I felt on thinking that this young man, who, by birth, fortune, and talent, stood high in life, should have lived so unconnected [with] and neglected by persons of his own rank, that there was not a single member of the senate to which he belonged, to whom he could or would apply to introduce him in a manner becoming his birth. I saw that he felt the situation, and I fully partook his indignation. If the neglect he had met with be imputed to an untoward or vicious disposition, a character which he gave himself, and which, I understood, was also given him by others, it is natural to ask, how he came by that disposition, for he got it not from Nature? Had he not been left early to himself, or rather to dangerous guides and companions, would he have contracted that disposition? Or even, had nature been cross, might it not have been rectified? During his long minority, ought not his heart and his intellect to have been trained to the situation he was to fill? Ought he not to have been saved from money-lenders, and men of business? And ought not a shield to have been placed over a mind so open to impressions, to protect it from self-sufficient free-thinkers and witty sophs? The wonder is, not that he should have erred, but that he should have broken through the cloud that enveloped him, which was dispersed solely by the rays of his own genius.”

P. 50-51-52.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PENINSULA.

Dublin, October 1, 1825.

THIS is the work of an officer who had been engaged in the peninsular wars, during which its materials were collected : it speaks a man equally well adapted to the profession of arms and to that department of authorship in which he appears, and both for the same reasons—from the abundance of intelligence, humanity and good-humour with which he has been gifted.

It has not been often my fortune to meet with a more pleasing narrative than this volume contains of observations upon the mere objects of the senses; it is quite unaffected and withal abounding in graphical and vivid delineation : disclosing too so great an insight into a very frank and amiable character, as creates an interest in all its possessor's adventures, while the whole is exempt from the least tincture of egotism.

There is not (as might be expected) much of abstract reflection contained in those pages : as however I always prefer something in that kind for my citations, I have marked a paragraph partaking the most of it. It is also a fair specimen of the general language and sentiment.

“ In Zafra, I once more embraced my brother officers, and found myself at home. Wander where he will, a regiment is ever, to a single man, the best of homes. There is no manner of life, which so effectually conceals from us the cheerlessness and the helplessness of celibacy, as the desultory life of a soldier. For him, who, by the want of fortune or other controlling circumstances, is debarred the exquisite happiness of reposing his aching heart on that blessed resting-place, the bosom of a wife,—for such a man there is no life, save one of travel or of military occupation, which can excite feelings of interest or consolation. The hazard of losing life, which a soldier is often called on to encounter, give [gives] to his existence, as often as it is preserved,

a value it would, otherwise, soon cease to possess. Frequent change of country and of scene, enliven and divert your thoughts; and if it is painful at a certain age, to think, that, when you fall, no widow, no child, will drop a tear over your grave,—it is, on the other hand, a comfort to know, that none are dependant on your existence; that none will be left unprovided and in misery at your death.”

P. 261-2.

LETTERS

FROM THE IRISH HIGHLANDS.

Dublin, October 13, 1825.

THIS series, I think, exactly hits the temperament of being light enough for the mere literary lounge, and sufficiently profound and theoretical for the reflecting or speculative reader. The author evinces in these letters every thing creditable to his understanding and heart, and if the character (or characters, for they profess to be written by various members of a family,) be but assumed, he is, I could almost venture to say, the same person who has already appeared so advantageously before the public, in “*To-day in Ireland*.” Both works are marked by the same liberality and fairness, by the same copious resources of illustrative anecdote, by the same acuteness of observation upon the national character, and the same graceful and polished style.

It may not perhaps be hypercritical to remark, that in this work the author’s general good-nature and his good feeling towards the Irish in especial, have led him to rather an unphilosophical length, as their advocate or apologist. If the national vices of the Irish be directly referrible to their misgovernment, and they themselves not chargeable with them to their full extent, neither are they, on the other hand, entitled to the full measure of commendation for those virtues which form an amalgam with those very vices and spring from the same causes. To illustrate—If the misgovernment of Ireland be justly arraigned as the final and efficient cause

of the idleness, dishonesty and other barbarous vices of the people, it is scarcely fair to give this very people all possible merit for the virtue of hospitality, for instance,—notoriously the virtue of barbarism, and the necessary concomitant of barbarous vices.

But enough of censure. The agreeable and the really useful and valuable in this collection, bear a decided preponderance, and happy will it be for this country if the press thus continues to engage general attention to our situation by its supply to the public entertainment.

One of the most remarkable tenets of this author is his approbation of the poor laws for Ireland. His arguments are certainly weighty, but it would seem necessary to enter much more largely into the question before he can claim the concurrence of his readers in those views. The advantages he reckons from their adoption seem to be briefly these : 1. Converting the present popular hostility to the laws into an interest in their support and proper administration ; 2. Putting an end to the great existing drain on the lower orders of voluntary, or rather prescriptive alms-giving ; and 3. Diminishing the actual numbers of paupers, which he cites authorized returns to prove has been their effect in England.

The following extract, though no better than a hundred others which might be selected, expresses naturally and eloquently, the feelings which the arrival of a stranger excites in a remote district.

“ A stranger made his appearance here yesterday, ‘ unbid,’ but I will not say, ‘ unblest,’ for strangers are always welcome. They bring us news from the low-lands, and keep up our connexion with the world beyond the mountains : they flatter us by admiring the magnificence of our scenery, and yet prevent our fancying ourselves the only people of importance in the empire. They give a zest and spirit to our society, of which you, who move in so different a sphere, can form very little idea. We have none of the dull, monotonous round of common place acquaintance ; who, with a calculating politeness, indulge you with a morning call once a fortnight, and an evening card once a month ;

‘ And would they know if you’re alive or dead,
They bid the footman put it in their head.’

“ From the ennui of all such visitors we are far removed. Ours

are of a different cast; gathered from every rank and class, they come with all the peculiarities of their character, in fine relief, all the angles sharp and salient; and entering as single strangers into a family circle, none of these finer touches of nature's chisel are worn away by an attempt to give too high a polish to the surface."

PALEY'S NATURAL THEOLOGY.

Dublin, Octob. 29, 1825.

THE scope of this work is, from the adaptation of such different faculties of nature as come within our observation, to the functions in which they were to be respectively employed, to infer the necessity of an intelligent, active, first cause, and to prove, in opposition to one class of Atheists, that the production of those organs necessary to the existence, conservation, and continuance of the different species of animal and vegetable substances could not have been the result of a succession of efforts in the original mass, any more than the present combinations could have been the effect of original appetencies in the dissociated particles, as is maintained by another description of infidels.

A work on this plan rather required a judicious selection of facts, than admitted of any great acuteness or complexity of reasoning. The inference is generally direct and immediate from the observation, and I, at least, am unpossessed of even an idea of any plausible, much less convincing reply which can be given to its general force. But notwithstanding the completeness with which its purpose is achieved, the "Natural Theology" does not exhibit the powers of Dr. Paley in so conspicuous a light as either his "Moral Philosophy," or his "Evidences." The phenomena he selects are almost all taken from anatomy and physiology, and excepting a very eloquent commencement, and a still more beautiful conclusion, in which a good deal of analogy is employed to prove the universal goodness of God, the whole is very much within the range of excellence that we might expect from a religious, sensible, naturalist or physician.

The author differs from most who have treated of the present

question, in not considering the celestial phenomena with which we are furnished by astronomy, as supplying the strongest evidences of the existence of an intelligent creator. The chapter in which he explains his reasons for this persuasion is that out of which I take my extract.

“My opinion of Astronomy has always been, that it is not the best medium through which to prove the agency of an intelligent creator; but that, this being proved, it shows, beyond all other sciences, the magnificence of his operations. The mind which is once convinced, it raises to sublimer views of the Deity than any other subject affords; but it is not so well adapted, as some other subjects are, to the purpose of argument. We are destitute of the means of examining the constitution of the heavenly bodies. The very simplicity of their appearance is against them. We see nothing, but bright points, luminous circles, or the phases of spheres reflecting the light which falls upon them. Now we deduce design from relation, aptitude, and correspondence of *parts*. Some degree therefore of *complexity* is necessary to render a subject fit for this species of argument. But the heavenly bodies do not, except perhaps in the instance of Saturn's ring, present themselves to our observation as compounded parts at all. This, which may be a perfection in them, is a disadvantage to us, as inquirers after their nature. They do not come within our mechanics.” *Ch. 22. Astronomy.*

PEPYS'S MEMOIRS.

Dublin, November 3, 1825.

THIS is the private journal of a worthy public functionary of the times of Charles II. and his brother, commencing with the year of the restoration of the former, and continuing almost uninterruptedly for the eight succeeding years. So secretly and so carefully was this diary kept during its progress, that it was not only given over when the failure of the writer's sight would have com-

pelled him to confide its continuance to another hand, but the discovery of its very existence, to which Mr. Pepys was unwarily betrayed by a reciprocal mark of confidence, was lamented by him as a great indiscretion, although made to but one person, and that a man of high character and one of his steadiest and most efficient friends. The first consideration which presents itself respecting a work like this, conversant with mere unadorned facts, is as to its authenticity; and it would be perhaps impossible to mention any which prefers more resistless claims on that head than the one in question. The fact of its being designed for no eye but its author's, and so jealously concealed from every other, is in itself almost conclusive upon the point; perhaps perfectly so as to the veracity of intention, or its moral truth. Its actual or logical truth is, I think, not less satisfactorily, though less directly inferrible from the character it develops—so candid, so upright, so simple and so impartial in every instance. Abiding within the contagious sphere of one of the most dissolute societies of any age or country; in constant habits of intercourse with the king and court, the salient points of all that dissoluteness; naturally addicted to pleasure and enjoyment; surrounded by great opportunities for amassing wealth by dishonest means, with every probability of impunity should he yield to the temptation; and those incitements acting upon a disposition whose greatest fault was perhaps a tincture of avarice; Mr. Pepys preserved his devotion to God and his probity towards his neighbour alike unimpaired; and what was perhaps still more extraordinary, carried through life with him, almost undiminished to the last, that simplicity, sincerity and even *bonhomie* of character, with which he commenced his career.

Such reflections as these induce me to attach a very high importance indeed to the publication of this book, both as supplying an irrefragable authority upon the events more purely historical of which it treats, and for its no less value as a text-book upon the perhaps still more curious, and certainly more entertaining subjects of the domestic habits and manners of the times.

Though so well deserving, and so well requiring a perusal, Mr. Pepys's diary is chargeable with those faults which might be expected from its construction. It abounds in repetitions. The intrigues and squabbles of the Tangier and Navy offices, are too fully detailed, and the routine of mere formal business occupies too large

a place for the patience of the reader of 1823. Indeed the excellent secretary, like Lucilius of old, committed to his diary every matter in any way pertaining to himself, with greater or less amplitude according to the degree in which it occupied his thoughts at the moment, whether the attractive subject were the pattern and materials of a new suit of clothes, an estimate of his income and outgoings, his opinion of a new play, his view of the position of public affairs, or what it might.

*Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
Credebat libris; neque, si malè cesserat usquam,
Decurrens aliò, neque si benè—.*

It is remarkable how nearly the personal character of Charles II. drawn in these pages coincides with the one commonly received. In whatever that of Pepys' differs from the latter, it is all to the disfavour of the "Merry Monarch."

I extract one of the annual recapitulations of the affairs of the author and the public, it is that which terminates the year 1662.

"Thus ends this year with great mirth to me and my wife. Our condition being thus :—we are at present spending a night or two at my Lord's lodgings at White-Hall. Our home at the Navy-office, which is and hath a pretty while been in a good condition, finished and made very convenient. By my last year's diligence in my office, blessed be God! I am come to a good degree of knowledge therein; and am acknowledged so by all the world, even the Duke himself, to whom I have a good access: and by that, and by my being Commissioner for Tangier, he takes much notice of me; and I doubt not but, by the continuance of the same endeavours, I shall in a little time come to be a man much taken notice of in the world, specially being come to so great an esteem with Mr. Coventry. Public matters stand thus: the King is bringing, as is said, his family, and Navy, and all his other charges, to a less expense. In the mean time, himself following his pleasures more than with good advice he would do; at least, to be seen to all the world to do so. His dalliance with my Lady Castlemaine being public, every day, to his great reproach; and his favouring of none at Court so much as those that are the confidants of his pleasure, as Sir H. Bennet and Sir

Charles Barkeley; which, good God! put it in his head to mend, before he makes himself too much contemned by his people for it. The Duke of Monmouth is in so great splendour at Court, and so dandled by the King, that some doubt, that, if the King should have no child by the Queene (which there is yet no appearance of), whether he would not be acknowledged for a lawful son; and that there will be a difference follow between the Duke of York and him; which God prevent! My Lord Chancellor is threatened by people to be questioned, the next sitting of the Parliament, by some spirits that do not love to see him so great: but certainly he is a good servant to the king. The Queene-Mother is said to keep too great a Court now; and her being married to my Lord St. Alban's is commonly talked of; and that they had a daughter between them in France, how true, God knows. The Bishops are high, and go on without any diffidence in pressing uniformity; and the Presbyters seem silent in it, and either conform or lay down, though without doubt they expect a turn, and would be glad these endeavours of the other Fanatiques would take effect; there having been a plot lately found, for which four have been publicly tried at the Old Bayley and hanged. My Lord Sandwich is still in good esteem, and now keeping his Christmas in the country, and I in good esteem, I think, as any man can be with him. In fine, for the good condition of myself, wife, family, and estate, in the great degree that it is, and for the public state of the nation, so quiet as it is, the Lord God be praised!"

Vol. 1. P. 191-2.

MOORE'S LIFE OF SHERIDAN.

Dublin, Novemb. 27, 1825.

THE conjunction of two such names as Sheridan and Moore, excite expectation to the utmost,—and expectation highly raised almost invariably leads to disappointment—and disappointment usually produces injustice. It is with such admissions and the addition of so many passages of beautiful writing and of curious in-

formation present to my mind, to deprecate the sentence, that I yet pronounce this book to be a failure in its totality, and remarkably dull and ponderous in the majority of its details. Mr. Sheridan indeed presents a subject surrounded with difficulties for the biographer : the notoriety of the political events in which he was most conspicuously engaged, and their momentous effects, give them the same prominent place in history, as the part borne in them by each individual of the constellation of illustrious men by whom they were chiefly transacted, assigns them in the respective memoirs of these individuals ; so that the biographer of Mr. Sheridan must not only copy extensively from the national records, but also transcribe whole scenes, changing only the relative places of the performers in the foreground, from the private memoirs of Fox, Pitt, and Burke. The eminence of Sheridan as a dramatic writer was also in some particulars unfavourable to his historian. The reviver of Forde, Massinger or Shirley might enliven his pages with citations of forgotten beauties or ingenious conjectures upon obsolete allusions : but who would bear an analysis of the merits of the "School for Scandal," or a scholia upon the "Critic?" Worse than even this too, the private history of Sheridan, his character and conduct were to be disposed of—and with all Mr. Moore's graceful palliation, the *postscenia* (as he would say himself) disclose but too much of what should shun the gairish eye of day—too much of what renders the defences and extenuations so anxiously laboured, rather creditable to the author's ingenuity than satisfactory apologies for his hero. Such are some of the embarrassments with which Mr. Moore had to contend.

There are faults however with which the biographer is exclusively chargeable : among these are a want of arrangement and harmony of parts throughout, and a resolution obstinately persevered in, of bringing forth the whole Sheridan family into a prominence to which they never could lay claim, except as connected with him who *here* at least should be supposed to speak sufficiently for himself. Mrs. Sheridan, the captivating Miss Linley, was an exception to a part of these observations, but to a part only. *She* was intrinsically an interesting personage, but she is certainly too much kept before the reader's eye, and her name is always the signal for some of that *hermaphroditic* style of writing which one does not know whether to assign to poetry or prose. But the

long letters of Mrs. Alicia Lefanu and Mr. Joseph her husband, are absolutely indefensible.

That part which interested me most was the curious and delightful analysis of the processes to which Mr. Sheridan subjected his ideas for their maturation, and his gradual perfectionment of the vesture in which they were ultimately arrayed. Even to the man whose opinion of himself is too humble, or too just to believe that by any art he could ever attemper his faculties into a polish and keenness at all comparable to Sheridan's, it is yet both grateful and encouraging to witness from what unpromising materials the finest results were elaborated, and how little in him, the rough and alloyed ore gave promise of the future polished and sparkling gem.

The genius of Sheridan being incontestably established by the monuments which it has left behind, it only remains to make a remark on his private character. Alas! how seldom can admiration and approval concur!—Mr. Sheridan was an essentially dishonest man—The epithet is strong, but none other will do. He commenced his career by swindling his own brother out of his mistress : he pursued his course by swindling his creditors out of their money, and he completed it by swindling his party out of their places. Mr. Moore treats the first fraud, although accompanied with circumstances of peculiar aggravation, as if he were of Jove's opinion, and laughed at love's perfidies. With respect to his creditors, Mr. Moore's defence amounts to this ; that some of themselves have constantly expressed their conviction that Sheridan *meant* well : but shall the man who obstinately persists in a course that renders the fulfilment of his good intentions (if he has them) morally impossible, get credit for such intentions, at least until he shall be first utterly stultified? Mr. Sheridan's treason to his party rests upon two main facts—the circumvention of Lords Grey and Grenville with respect to the address in 1811, and the suppression of an authorized communication, removing the only obstruction to their attaining power in 1812. For the first, Sheridan himself published an awkward apology, like all awkward apologies, making bad worse—for the second, no apology is, or I suppose, can be offered. All that is to be said upon it is that (to use Mr. Moore's expression) he mined the ground under his own feet as well as his friends', and sunk with them. Unlike them though, he sunk degraded, and unfriended.

It is worthy of remark how very strongly Mr. Moore inculcates the opinion of the present King being hostile to the Catholic claims; and it is highly creditable to him to have touched upon that and other tender subjects with so much calmness and moderation as he uniformly evinces.

I take for my extract (and I am not sure that I am right in so doing) the greater part of the summary of Mr. Pitt's ministerial conduct.

“In judging of the policy of Mr. Pitt during the Revolutionary war, his partisans, we know, laud it as having been the means of salvation to England, while his opponents assert that it was only prevented by chance from being her ruin—and though the event gives the appearance of triumph to the former opinion, it by no means removes or even weakens the grounds of the latter. During the first nine years of his administration, Mr. Pitt was, in every respect, an able and most useful minister, and ‘while the sea was calm, showed mastership in floating.’ But the great events that happened afterwards took him by surprise. When he came to look abroad from his cabinet into the storm that was brewing through Europe, the clear and enlarged view of the higher order of statesman was wanting. Instead of elevating himself above the influence of the agitation and alarm that prevailed, he gave way to it with the crowd of ordinary minds, and even took counsel from the panic of others. The consequence was a series of measures, violent at home and inefficient abroad—far short of the mark where vigour was wanting, and beyond it as often, where vigour was mischievous.

“When we are told to regard his policy as the salvation of the country—when (to use a figure of Mr. Dundas), a *claim of salvage* is made for him,—it may be allowed us to consider a little the measures by which this alleged salvation was achieved. If entering into a great war without either consistency or plan, or preparation of means, and with a total ignorance of the financial resources of the enemy *—if allowing one part of the Cabinet to flatter the French Royalists, with the hope of seeing the

* “Into his erroneous calculations upon this point he is supposed to have been led by Sir Francis D'Ivernois.”

Bourbons restored to undiminished power, while the other part acted, whenever an opportunity offered, upon the plan of dismembering France for the aggrandizement of Austria, and thus, at once, alienated Prussia at the very moment of subsidizing him, and lost the confidence of all the Royalist party in France *, except the few who were ruined by English assistance at Quiberon—if going to war in 1793 for the right of the Dutch, to a river, and so managing it that in 1794 the Dutch lost their whole seven provinces—if lavishing more money upon failures than the successes of a century had cost, and supporting this profusion by schemes of finance, either hollow or delusive, like the sinking fund, or desperately regardless of the future, like the paper issues—if driving Ireland into rebellion by the perfidious recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, and reducing England to two of the most fearful trials, that a nation, depending upon Credit and a navy, could encounter, the stoppage of her Bank and a mutiny in the fleet—if, finally, floundering on from effort to effort against France, and then dying upon the ruins of the last Coalition he could muster against her—if all this betokens a wise and able minister, then is Mr. Pitt most amply entitled to that name;—then are the lessons of wisdom to be read, like Hebrew, backward, and waste and rashness and systematic failure to be held the only true means of saving a country.”

KELLY'S MEMOIRS.

Dublin, November 30, 1825.

I APPREHEND that (as his friend Sheridan would say,) this veteran vocalist is indebted to his imagination for his facts, and to his memory for his jests. His book contains a large assortment in

* “ Among other instances, the Abbé Maury is reported to have said at Rome, in a large company of his countrymen :—‘ Still we have one remedy—let us not allow France to be divided—we have seen the partition of Poland : we must all turn Jacobins to preserve our country.’ ”

either kind, and from the gross incorrectness of that part of the account which we have the means of auditing, it seems not very unfair to presume that the remainder, or as much of it as rests upon the author's unsupported testimony, may be rather in the *ad libitum* style : particularly as it is besides, internally suspicious. The portion of the work within the reader's power to check, is the concluding part—that professedly detailing the events of Kelly's life from his arrival in England forwards, but which is in reality little more than a theatrical register, diversified by the particulars of one or two trips to Paris—a few excursions of pleasure, and some anecdotes of various degrees of novelty. In this, his account of theatrical events is astonishingly incorrect—replete with misstatements of what must have occurred under his own eye; which he could have no conceivable motive to falsify and upon which, if his memory failed him, he had opportunities of refreshing it by a reference to the most authentic sources. From this carelessness about matters of fact in which he was unconcerned, one becomes very distrustful of the veracity of such relations as involve his own glory : such are almost the whole of the foreign adventures—the eccentric persons he everywhere encounters—his rapid transitions from suffering under the frowns of fortune, to the enjoyment of not her smiles, but her warmest embraces—his bitter enemies changing without cause or deliberation into his most ardent friends—his intimate acquaintance with crowned heads and potentates *—the number of the great luminaries of genius which he was able to constellate at once within his horizon—the plots laid for his life, and the dramatic justice always effected on the perpetrators ;—all this conspires powerfully with the leaven of infidelity we imbibe from the source already noticed, to persuade us—not indeed that Mr. Kelly relates what is impossible to have occurred, but that he has simply forgotten, and appropriated the varicoloured adventures of sundry other fortune-seeking heroes to his own melodiferous person.

* In Italy, Germany, France I have been,
Where Princes I've lived with and Kings I have seen,
The great have caress'd me,
The fair have address'd me,
Nay, smiles I have had from a Queen!

Lionel and Clarissa.

Considering that Mr. Kelly's concern has always been more with *sound* than *sense*, his book is really remarkably well written *. The style flowing and perspicuous and borrowing perhaps something of cadence from his practised ear. Take away some loyal effusions certainly stolen from his friends Cobb's or Dibdin's sailors, and a nauseous habit of belabouring every one he mentions with indiscriminate praise, and the sentiments will also pass unobjected to.

Michael Kelly himself seems to be a jolly, good humoured, boon companion—the lover of a good *spread* and a chirping glass, and the admirer of fun and hoaxing—to which latter enjoyments he apparently contributed with equal willingness as agent or patient, whether to be laughed *with*, or laughed *at*. A man in short, like Falstaff, rather to be liked than esteemed. And so I take leave of his book, which I think has merit enough to survive for a season—the average vitality I believe of his more legitimate compositions.

The following story, though savouring somewhat of getting up, and stage effect, is well told and affords a good specimen of the style.

“ Five acts of a play, read by its author after *tea*, are at any time opiates of the most determined nature, even if one has risen late and moved little; but with such a predisposition to somnolency as I found the drive, the dust, the sun, the air, the dinner, and a little sensible conversation had introduced, what was to be expected? Long before the end of the second act I was fast as a church—a slight tendency to snoring rendered this misfortune more appalling than it otherwise would have been; and the numberless kicks which I received under the table from Bannister, served only to vary, by fits and starts, the melody with which nature chose to accompany my slumbers.

“ When it is recollected, that our host and reader † had served Sheridan as a model for Sir Fretful, it may be supposed that he was somewhat irritated by my inexcusable surrender of myself: but no; he closed his proceedings and his manuscript at the end of the second act, and we adjourned to a rational supper upon a

* It is said the materials only were furnished by Kelly, and the book written by T. Hook.

† Richard Cumberland.

cold mutton-bone, and dissipated in two tumblers of weak red wine and water.

"When the repast ended, the bard conducted us to our bedrooms: the apartment in which I was to sleep was his study; he paid me the compliment to say, he had a little tent-bed put up there, which he always appropriated to his favourite guest. 'The bookcase at the side,' he added, 'was filled with his own writings.'

"I bowed, and said, 'I dare say, Sir, I shall sleep very soundly.'

"'Ah! very good,' said he; 'I understand you,—a hit, Sir, a palpable hit; you mean being so close to my writings, they will act as a soporific. You are a good soul, Mr. Kelly, but a very drowsy one—God bless you—you are a kind creature, to come into the country to listen to my nonsense—*buonas noches!* as we say in Spain—good night!' I hope it will be fine weather for you to walk about in the morning; for I think, with Lord Falkland, who said he pitied unlearned gentlemen on a rainy day—umph—good night, God bless you,—you are so kind.' "

Vol. 2. P. 132-3-4.

WADDINGTON'S VISIT TO GREECE.

Dublin, December 7, 1825.

I READ this book while suffering under an obtuse and stupifying headache, and consequently am very probably going to transfer to it some of the faults which are attributable to myself. Nevertheless I *will* venture the opinion, that neither for its matter or its execution, is it deserving of much encomium.

Mr. Waddington purports to give a sketch of the actual state of Greece; to remount to the causes immediately productive, or provocative of the revolution; and to state the arguments for and against the successful issue of that revolution—(inclining strongly, I rejoice to see, to the favourable side.) He has done none of these things well, in my judgment—He does not give a clear account of the present

aspect of affairs in Greece; nor why it is that that country is so prematurely rent into domestic factions; nor what are the prominent subjects of contest among those factions. Still less does he supply us with any satisfactory salient point from which to deduce the origin of the revolution itself; but in the epic style, to which in his language he also appears to have a remarkable tendency, he opens out at once *in medias res*, instead of pointing out the elemental spark of Grecian independence and tracing its various spreadings up to its final expansion in the existing conflagration. With regard to the termination of the contest, Mr. W. is more satisfactory. He reasons that from a choice of evils, the Greeks would prefer even certain annihilation in the struggle for their freedom, to the equally certain, but more painful and besides inglorious destruction to which submission to the Turks would expose them; and that having now enjoyed some of the blessings of liberty, they can never again be reduced to slavery. After all, Mr. Waddington's main design seems to have been to vindicate the conduct, in regard to the Greek struggle, of the British government at large, and of the commissioners of the Ionian Islands in particular. In this he labours with all the earnestness naturally to be looked for in a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge; utterly depreciating the Greek character and the Phil-Hellenists, as necessary to his main design: the first he treats as an orientalised people, ignorant of, and hostile to European institutions, suspicious and therefore ungrateful; at once disliking and ridiculing those Europeans who have assumed the before-mentioned pedantic title, and who, by necessary inference, appear as deluded visionaries—expending their labour and their money to an unattainable end. The extent of conviction which Mr. W's reasonings and facts upon this question may produce in his readers, will depend very much upon their preconceived opinions.

I have already condemned Mr. Waddington's style—it is, if not essentially bad, at least inapplicable to the construction of his book; broken as it is into short, disconnected letters, to which the long cumbrous sentences give greatly the air of a dwarf with giant's limbs.

For a specimen :—

“ Athens, January 1824.

“Independent Greece is distinguished by five grand divisions, Eastern and Western Hellas, the Islands, the Peloponnesus, and Crete. Eastern Hellas, whose condition I shall now describe, will be considered by some persons as the most interesting province of Greece, inasmuch as Athens is its capital ; for, however deformed and lacerated, however scarred with the sabre and the firebrand, however steeped in tears and in blood, Athens is again a Grecian city, and again the capital of a Grecian province. If I could unclothe the gates of futurity, and contemplate this immortal daughter of antiquity, such as she may be and will be, when the season of her regeneration shall be accomplished, and she shall have purged away the foul impurities of slavery,—glorious, and virtuous, and beautiful, as in her days of youthful splendour,—how eagerly would I tear from my memory the picture of what she is, and close the cold and melancholy volume of truth.

“ But if our prayers have hitherto been imperfectly accorded, for the foot of destiny can seldom keep pace with the impatience of human wishes, let us at least not be ungrateful for the change which has already been granted to them. The first great step has been accomplished : Athens *was* under the despotism of a Turk ; she *is* under the despotism of a Greek : she had a Mahometan, she has a Christian, government : the doors of improvement and civilization are thus thrown open, the path is broad, and easy of discovery.”

P. 59-40.

MEMOIRS OF ELIZABETH

QUEEN OF BOHEMIA.

Dublin, Decemb. 21, 1825.

THIS is a dispiriting narrative, and to a person in misfortune, somewhat alarming too ; for it falsifies the common consolations

applied to sufferers, of the calm after the storm, and the amelioration which the constant revolution of the wheel of fortune effects for them, when once their place on its circumference has reached its lowest point. From her accession to the crown of Bohemia, the storms which assailed Elizabeth and her family were succeeded by no calm, and the wheel of fortune seemed to exchange its rotary for a vibratory motion, so as to keep their position always fluctuating about the spot of its greatest depression. It was enough too, (so contagious was their misery,) for any person to appear as the friend or champion of this afflicted family, to ensure the sealing of his destruction, either at once, before he had effected anything in their behalf, or still more tantalizingly, after much had been done and final success seemed within his grasp. This race, in short, seems to have been among those victims whom Heaven exhibits sometimes upon earth, always blameless and always afflicted, as it were to direct men's views to another world for the vindication of its justice.

Elizabeth, the very interesting heroine of these volumes, was the eldest (quære, not the only?) daughter of James I. by Anne of Denmark his Queen. She was born at Falkland in Scotland, in 1596, and after the union of the crowns, placed under the care of Lord and Lady Harrington, and by them educated at Combe Abbey in Warwickshire. In 1613, she was publicly married to Frederic Elector Palatine, and almost immediately after set out with him to inhabit his paternal dominions, journeying through Holland, where she was received with remarkable distinction by her husband's maternal uncle, William, Prince of Orange. Arrived at Heidelberg, the capital of the Palatinate, she was enthusiastically welcomed by her subjects, and for six years appears to have enjoyed a tranquil and even happy life, marked by a domestic character rarely found in courts. In 1620, the Bohemians threw off the yoke of the reigning Emperor Ferdinand I. and the election of sovereign devolved on Frederic. After some fluctuation of opinion, occasioned by the prudent counsels and forecast of his mother Juliana on the one side, and the more sanguine suggestions of his wife and of his own bosom on the other, Frederic in an unlucky hour accepted of the nomination, and

He was soon compelled to fly from Prague with his entire family, after being defeated in a pitched battle in which his forces were commanded by the Prince of Anhalt and Count Hohenloe, while those of the Emperor were under the conduct of the Duke of Bavaria and Count Bucquoy. From this blow the fortunes of Frederic never recovered : the loss of his paternal dominions immediately followed, and he himself continued an outcast for the remainder of his life, which terminated in 1633; his wife all the while remaining a pensioner at the Hague, and his children dispersed among various relatives. It were needless to recapitulate the many abortive efforts made between the deposition and death of Frederic for the recovery of his rights. Count Mansfeld, a celebrated commander and the introducer of standing armies in Europe; Christian of Brunswick, a kinsman of Elizabeth, and himself more the hero of romance than of history; and lastly and principally Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, successively espoused the interests of the Palatine family, and successively sunk under their overwhelming influence. To these were principally opposed Tilly, and Wallenstein, of Generals, and of politicians Ferdinand the Emperor, the Duke of Bavaria, and (however unnatural it may appear), James and Charles the First of England. The cause of hostility or aversion in the two latter seems to have been the close union of interests and sentiment which subsisted between the Palatine family and the British Puritans. After the death of Frederic, Elizabeth continued to reside at the Hague, enduring an uninterrupted succession of calamities and vexations, with the friendship of but one individual (Lord Craven) of all the world to resort to, until the accession of Charles II. when, almost uninvited, and unwelcome, she returned to England, and there died soon after (1662), in the 66th year of her age.

The Princess Sophia, in whose right the reigning family occupy the throne of England, was the youngest daughter of the king and Queen of Bohemia, and was prevented ascending it herself by an instance of critical ill-luck, almost looking like the birth-right of her family—dying a few days before Queen Anne.

This memoir has been my introduction to Miss Benger as an author. She does not always write grammatically; for instance she has an unwarrantable habit of making the verb agree with the objective or oblique case; and she is too fond of long words, by which her

sentences sometimes run heavily and encumbered; but nevertheless the author of this memoir prefers claims to considerable literary merit. Like all female writers I know of, she excels in description, and has besides very considerable powers in delineating subjects of tenderness and pathos. The extract I attach is both affecting and rational.

“In writing this letter, it is evident that Frederic struggled against the sinister impressions which perpetually recurred to his mind. He was aware that Gustavus adhered to the resolution of giving battle to Wallenstein, whose very name conveyed an awful presage to Frederic’s mind, and of whom it had been the first exploit to drive out of Germany the most accomplished chief of the day,—the brilliant, though unsuccessful Mansfeld : who should guarantee Gustavus from a similar fate? and, if this light were extinguished, what other chief should again rise to disperse the darkness that lowered on Germany and Protestant Europe? These reflections alloyed the satisfaction that Frederic might otherwise have tasted in seeing Frankenthal (for the first time since its cession to the crafty infant) about to be restored to its rightful sovereign, whilst he received from his subjects, no less than his brother, and his mother, the most cordial felicitations on the probable termination of his adversity. In defiance of these salutary influences, Frederic suffered a relapse of that fever which had so long preyed on his frame. By the application of the usual palliatives, its violence was suspended, and, with care and attention, a complete recovery might be anticipated : but the true source of his malady was intense anxiety, operating upon susceptible and disappointed feelings—the sickness of hope deferred had undermined his strength—the chagrin he had long endured in silence—the ruin into which he had seen his family precipitated by his misfortunes—the calamities heaped on his father-land—the awful contrast presented by the past and the future—‘above all,’ says Spanheim, ‘the agonizing recollection of that beloved son, whose imploring accents still vibrated on his ear, but whom he was unable to redeem from death,’—all these unfortunate circumstances unfitted the patient for further struggles; and it was but too obvious that another stroke must terminate his mortal career.”

In this state of his mind the news of the victory of Lutzen reached him, embittered by the further intelligence of the death of Gustavus. Miss Benger goes on :

“ ‘It is the will of God!’ cried Frederic, in an accent that conveyed an intimation he was himself preparing to die. It was in vain to suggest that by this calamity his own position was improved, since Oxenstiern had no power to render him tributary to Sweden for the Palatinate. Frederic was no longer capable of political calculations; he felt only that in Gustavus he had lost a steady, an honourable friend; more faithful than any ally, and kinder than any kinsman, whom he possessed *; and that, after having so nearly approached the port, he was once more driven back to struggle with the unrelenting waves. To calamities presented in a new form he might have opposed fortitude and courage; but to sustain a repetition of the evils he had already suffered was beyond the limits of human endurance. With Gustavus had perished his best hopes; after that mournful event, he had only to follow him to an untimely grave.” *V. 2. P. 307-8-9-10-11.*

JOURNAL OF AN EXILE.

Dublin, January 17, 1826.

THIS is not a very respectable van-leader of the studies of 1826 : it is wordy and unimpressive; affecting the mind like those things which “come like shadows, so depart.” The “Journal of an Exile” is composed of the reflections, conversations and correspondence of a care-worn young Englishman, who, to forget his sorrows and divert his spleen, takes up his residence at Marseilles : pries into the history of all the people with whom he converses; deals largely in the picturesque, and dies writing verses, leaving the world in total ignorance of who or what he was and of the source of so many op-

* Spanheim, *Mémoires de l'Electrice Louise Juliane*.—Levassor, *Histoire de Louis XIII.*

pressive afflictions. Notwithstanding the contributions of his acquaintance, the Exile's two volumes are sadly devoid of interest of every kind ; consisting, as they do almost exclusively, of scenic description, the most trite and vague of all species of authorship. The incidents which are collected to distinguish these pages from a mere rambling topography, are however not such as to make us regret their paucity. A shipwrecked sailor returning to die in the arms of an aged mother and blooming betrothed—a diluted plagiarism from Washington Irving : an account of the plague of Marseilles and particularly of its ravages in the family of the relater, with two or three sketches even more trivial and commonplace, comprise all the events scattered through nearly 700 octavo pages. If Washington Irving be responsible for all this frothy insipidity of his disciples, his own great reputation will hardly suffice to buoy him up and keep him steadily before the gale of public favour.

I extract a passage explaining the mode of holding communication with persons supposed to be infected with the plague, adopted at the Lazaretto of Marseilles.

“ The regulations respecting the system of quarantine are interesting, and, I may say, impressive. There are always stationed at Pomègue, one of the islands which lie in the bay, and where all vessels are compelled to stop, boats which belong to the Board of Health. As soon as any ship has cast anchor at the island, one of these boats approaches it, and the captain of the ship, getting into his own boat, is towed by the other up to that part of the Lazaretto which looks upon the sea. As soon as they have arrived there, one of the officers of health presents himself in a balcony in front of the lodge that overlooks the coast, and holds up one of the Gospels, framed and covered with a glass. The captain extending a long rod, touches it, and swears by the holy Crucifix to speak the truth. He is then asked from whence he comes, the nature of his cargo, the number of his crew, the communication he may have had with other vessels, and, finally, the number of his passengers, and their quality. The captain then presents his bill of health at the end of the rod, which the attendants receive with pincers, dipped into vinegar, and spread out upon a plank before the officer. According to the orders which this latter may give, the captain regulates his proceedings,

and either places his vessel near the chain of the port, or returns to Pomegue and awaits further instructions."

Vol. 1. P. 185-6.

STEWART'S PHILOSOPHY

OF THE HUMAN MIND.

Dublin, January 15—19, 1826.

ONE of the earlier volumes of those strictures contains an abstract of the above work, which on looking over, I find to coincide pretty nearly with what I should now feel disposed to say upon it. To that article I accordingly refer, adding the observation of that most surprising fact, that the ingenious and novel theory of dreams which is propounded in one of the chapters, was written when the author was but eighteen years of age!

CAPTAIN HALL'S JOURNAL

IN SOUTH AMERICA.

Dublin, January 24, 1826.

I AM not aware of any book more calculated to unite in its favour, the suffrages of various tastes and habits of mind, than the present. The light reader, the admirer of historical detail, and the abstract reasoner, will each meet with what is congenial to his pursuit in its pages, while the critic of style and language will find in them a model to which to direct the emulation of all writers of narrative. There is something at once exciting and nutritious to the mind, thus to feast on substantial and palatable fare after being gorged and yet unsatisfied with the light, vapid and fantastical

servings-up of the modern literary repasts. For animated and picturesque representation of sensible objects ; for clear, methodical and impressive historic sketches, both of events and individuals ; for just and philosophical reflection, it would, I think, be difficult to point out Captain Hall's superior : yet these powerful effects are produced apparently without labour or art : no idea is ever twice presented ; not a single metaphor or quotation occurs from the commencement of the book to the end ; but all flows on simply and naturally upon a current of smooth, lucid eloquence, on which the reader is borne with a uniform motion, leisurely enough to allow him to examine the objects he passes, and with sufficient rapidity to sustain an agreeable excitement in his spirits. The author has indeed deserved well of his reading countrymen, and distinguished himself by a production well entitled to be the commencement of a new and improved era in the literature of the age. It is, however, rather to be wished than expected that his manner should be extensively imitated : its basis is the subservience of words to things ; or, in other words, extensive speculative and experimental information, a matter of too difficult acquirement to be expected in a very large class of writers.

It is time however to descend to something more particular, and I therefore proceed with a slight summary of the contents.

The journal commences with the doubling of Cape Horn on the voyage to Valparaiso, the sea port of St. Jago, where Captain Hall anchored in December 1820. That being the season of the Christmas festivities, he had an opportunity of seeing the people and their customs to the greatest advantage, and accordingly a most amusing relation connected with these subjects is given. From Valparaiso Captain Hall proceeded on an equestrian excursion to St. Jago, the capital of Chili, and he describes all the incidents of that journey with the utmost force and distinctness. It is remarkable with reference to this excursion, how much the mistakes into which the European party were led by the unwonted magnitude of the objects around them, and the novel effect of light and shade, corroborate the metaphysical opinion of our ideas of size and distance being the pure result of experience. We have next an account of the commencement and progress of the Chilian revolution, which appears to have been ten years in effectuating—from 1808 to 1818. San Martin and Lord Cochrane, to whom its final success

seems mainly attributable, are now introduced : the first, as the least known and the most important actor of the two, is most conspicuously kept in the foreground. The efficient cause of this and the other South American revolutions was the intolerable burden of the Spanish yoke ; and I read with great satisfaction a practical refutation of a theory which I embraced myself,—that long endured political slavery, by degrading the moral man, disables him from taking advantage of the most favourable opportunities for his liberation. In this instance the thralldom was complete—the mind and person kept in equal subjugation, and nevertheless a vigorous effort was made at the fitting opportunity, and its energy never relaxed until the moment of complete deliverance. The character of San Martin, as represented by Captain Hall, unites in an extraordinary degree, the ardour, devotedness, and romance of the ruder ages, with the policy and temperance of civilized ones ; and perhaps it is partly owing to this singular combination that every thing relating to him is invested with so peculiar an interest—an interest in which the author seems most fully to have participated. His valour, his moderation, his simplicity, and the admirable tact with which he conducted himself in the most critical conjunctures, are all represented to perfection.

With regard to Lord Cochrane, we have little more than a minute account of his cutting out the Spanish frigate from the Callao roads. This glorious exploit is described so as to cause a suppression of the breath until one gives it way in the utterance of a resistless exclamation of delight upon our arrival at the happy accomplishment.

This event, which formed part of the Peruvian campaign (Callao being the port of Lima) was followed, though not immediately, by the surrender of Lima to San Martin, which took place in July 1821, thus establishing the independence of that important district.

From Lima, the Conway returned to Valparaiso, and the author witnessed, and most graphically describes, the exhibition of the *lasso*, or celebrated South American method of snaring wild cattle. A visit to Conception is the event next in order, and that each scene may have its appropriate hero, we are here introduced to the pirate Benavides, of whose surprising career a full relation is given.

The second volume opens with a detail of the mining system as

practised in the coastward parts of Chili, and this is clearly and yet succinctly explained. The inquisitive mind of the writer, and the good account to which he turns all his opportunities for observation, are remarkably striking in this part of his book. After this inspection and another visit to Lima, now under the regimen of San Martin, Captain Hall went northwards to the coast of Columbia, where he visited Guayaquil and some other places ; proceeding to Panama, and terminating at once his expedition and his book at San Blas in Mexico, after giving an historical outline of the revolution of this government also, together with the achievements and unhappy catastrophe of its champion, Iturbide.

I select for citation the following fine reflections upon the existing circumstances of South America.

“There has seldom, perhaps, existed in the world a more interesting scene than is now passing in South America ; or one in which human character, in all its modifications, has received so remarkable a stimulus to untried action ; where the field is so unbounded, and the actors in it so numerous ; where every variety of moral and physical circumstance is so fully subjected to actual trial ; or where so great a number of states living under different climates, and possessed of different soils, are brought under review at the same moment, are placed severally and collectively in similar situations, and are forced to act and think for themselves for the first time : where old feelings, habits, laws, and prejudices, are jumbled along with new institutions, new knowledge, new customs, and new principles, all left free to produce what chance and a thousand unthought-of causes may direct, amidst conflicting interests and passions of all kinds, let loose to drift along the face of society. To witness the effects of such a prodigious political and moral experiment as this, even in our hurried way, was in the highest degree gratifying and instructive. But the impossibility of examining the whole at leisure, of watching its progress, of arranging and connecting the different parts together, and of separating what was accidental and transient, from what was general and permanent, was a source of the greatest mortification.”

Vol. 2. P. 150-1.

MILL'S ELEMENTS

OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

Dublin, January 30, 1826.

THE above date, contrary to the usual practice, refers to the times when this article was written, and does not measure the period occupied in the perusal. This treatise has been in my possession for about a year and a half, during which period I have read it three times through : the first time with few and slight glimmerings of intelligence; the second time, with somewhat steadier, but still imperfect light; and even now, I much doubt whether I have obtained sufficiently clear views, successfully to accomplish that epitome which I propose to attempt.

Mr. Mill divides the science of Political Economy into four grand constituent parts :

- I. PRODUCTION.
- II. DISTRIBUTION.
- III. EXCHANGE.
- IV. CONSUMPTION.

PRODUCTION—CAPITAL.

I. *Production* is the effect of *labour* and *capital*. Capital is divided into *fixed* and *reproduced* (better *reproductive*) capital. Fixed capital is not consumed or destroyed in contributing to production : reproduced capital is. Capital in general is only the savings of labour, and may be called *hoarded* labour, as the other may be called *immediate* labour, into which the hoarded labour is resolvable. Consequently production is purely the result of labour.

DISTRIBUTION.

II. *Distribution* is the share which the two classes of persons concerned in production must have of the commodities produced.

When land happens to be one of the instruments of production, a third party, the owners of the land, comes in for share. These three classes therefore, the labourers, the capitalists and the landlords, must divide amongst them the entire annual produce of the country.

The labourer's share is *wages*.

The capitalist's share is *profits of stock*.

The landlord's share is *rent*.

RENT.

Rent is defined to be "that part of the return made to the more productive portions of capital [applied to land], by which it exceeds the return made to the least productive portions." It increases in proportion as the power of the capital successively bestowed upon the land diminishes *.

After thus establishing a rule for the ascertainment of the landlord's share of production, the treatise proceeds to consider the ratios of the shares which the two remaining classes divide, or in other words the ratio between wages and the profits of stock:—this is manifestly an inverse ratio—the smallness of wages making profits large, and *vice-versâ*.

WAGES.

In the section upon wages it is shown, and in a way to silence all question, that the rate of wages depends on the proportion between population and capital. If these two coefficients increase or diminish in the same proportion, no change of wages will take place. If population increase faster than capital, wages will fall; if capital increases the more rapidly of the two, wages will rise. The tendency of capital to increase less rapidly than population is next maintained.

PROPORTION BETWEEN THE INCREASE OF CAPITAL AND OF POPULATION

The argument is this:—Either the annual progress is distributed so as to give the bulk of the people abundant means of subsistence,

* Because according as the productive power of the capital applied to land diminishes, will classes of lands of inferior quality be taken into cultivation, and rent is also "the difference between the returns to the best and to the worst lands under cultivation."

and a smaller portion is added to the incomes of the rich, or the bulk of the people are reduced to absolute necessities and there arises a class of persons whose income is large, i. e. two extreme, and two mean cases. In neither of those cases, the author argues, will the principle of saving (or creating capital) be very strong in any one of the four classes of persons contained in them both. Therefore population, which has been before shown to have a tendency, if not obstructed, to increase rapidly, will outrun the increase of capital, which latter increase is also rendered more difficult at every step of its progress. It is necessary therefore to consider the artificial means of making population and capital keep pace together.

FORCIBLE METHODS OF REPRESSING THE GROWTH OF POPULATION AND STIMULATING
THAT OF CAPITAL.

These may obviously be to repress the growth of the one, or to stimulate that of the other. The first mode seems to have the preference with Mr. Mill, who thus, I believe, coincides with Malthus. To the second mode, or the forcible means of increasing capital, he states these objections. Its first result would be that capital would be applied to land with a less annual return, or to land of a worse and worse quality, which is the equivalent. Hence the rent of land would be increased and the profits of stock or of capital, (the necessary effect of that,) would be proportionally diminished. Hence a competition would arise for the purchase of land, the sales of which would be either few or many—if few, the country would consist of a small number of rich landlords in the midst of a poor population—a manifest evil. If the sales of land were frequent, then it would be divided soon into very small portions and the situation of the possessors little better than that of labourers. It is contended that this is an undesirable situation for a nation to be placed in, as the greatest happiness of the community consists in the greater number of persons contained in it who are possessed of competence, or persons who are not solicitous about their future subsistence. If all this be fairly reasoned, it follows that in *no* case is it desirable to use forcible means to increase capital. At the conclusion of this section, the author notices and condemns Mr. Owen's plan as either useless or pernicious.

EXCHANGEABLE VALUE.

III. The third division of the treatise is that upon *Exchange*, and the first question determined is the regulator of exchangeable value of commodities which is demonstrated, by an analysis I think quite complete, to be the quantity of labour expended in their production. There is a curious investigation of the effects upon the exchangeable value of commodities, according as a greater or less proportion of immediate labour, as compared with capital or hoarded labour, is employed in their production; it is quite too long however to transcribe, and I could not abridge it. Besides the conclusions are manifest after a little reflection.

With respect to the question of when it is the interest of nations to interchange commodities, the following theorem is laid down and beautifully exemplified. "Whenever the purchasing power of any commodity with respect to another, is less, in one of two countries, than it is in the other, it is the interest of those countries to exchange these commodities with one another." The necessity of exchanging commodities occasions the necessity of having a medium of exchange, or a commodity which to effect an exchange between two other commodities is first received in exchange for one, and then given in exchange for another. Hence the origin of *money*.

MONEY.

The value of money is regulated by the quantity of it in a country. This fact is clearer at first view than it becomes after a whole chapter has been written to prove it. Thus it seems best to let self-evident things alone. The quantity of money determining its exchangeable value, the next question is, what determines the quantity of money? and this is shown to be the labour or cost of production: thus reducing money to the common standard by which the value of all other commodities is regulated. Government may, by forcible methods, reduce the quantity of money to a small extent below the natural quantity, and to a still less extent raise it above that quantity. The effect in the first case, which means the non-converting of bullion into money, is to give a stimulus to coining: the effect in the second case would be to make every one melt the coins. The next section discusses the effect of employing two metals as standard money, in which it is shown that the consequence of increasing or diminishing the proportion between each will be to

make that metal whose price falls as compared with the other, to superabound, while the high-priced metal disappears from the market. Thus if the fixed relative value of gold and silver is as 15 to 1, and the market price renders them as 16 to 1, the gold will disappear—again if the value becomes as 14 to 1, the silver will disappear.

PAPER MONEY.

In consequence of the difficulty of transporting the precious metals from one country to another in large quantities, a substitute was to be found, and hence the invention of bills of exchange, or paper money. The advantages stated to be derived from a paper currency are its portableness (manifestly,) and its preventing an exportation of a country's commodities for the purpose of providing a medium of exchange. Is there not however a fallacy here? I propose the question with doubt. But if a paper currency must be always exchangeable into a metallic one, as it must be, except in extraordinary cases, must not the same process be gone through for the obtaining the one as the other? The inconveniences to which the use of paper money is liable are said to be, 1. the failures of the note-issuers; 2. forgery; 3. alteration in the value of the currency. Mr. Mill thinks the first evil would be greatly obviated by adopting the Scotch plan of allowing an unlimited number of partners in a bank, giving to government the function of conducting the issuing of notes. The objections to this plan, arising from the possibility of civil war, are then stated and answered, and also the other two evils stated are discussed. Where paper is exchangeable for coins or metal, its value is always determined by the value of the metal which can be obtained for it. Government can however issue paper without obligation to pay for it, in either of two ways—either by rendering it legal tender without obligation to give metal in exchange, or suspending the obligation of an establishment like the Bank of England, to pay for its notes, whereby its quantity is increased and its value diminished indefinitely. The effects of this increase of quantity and diminution of value, are, to raise prices, and to occasion a loss to all persons who had a right to receive a sum of money of the old and undiminished value. Mr. Hume's doctrine, that an increase of money encourages production, is given and refuted. The value of the precious metals determines whether a

country shall export or import. If the precious metals be high-priced in any country, then correlatively other commodities are cheap, and will therefore be exported. If the precious metals be low-priced, by parity of reasoning that country will become an importing one; and the regulator of the relative value of the precious metals between two countries is the cost of carriage of the commodities for which it is exchanged. The mode in which the precious metal distributes itself among the nations of the globe is clearly exhibited. It is first plenty in the country of the mines—in other words, of low relative value—consequently other articles are dear; importation is thus effected, and gold goes out in exchange. Gold thus becomes plenty in the export country; or prices rise: therefore importation of commodities to exchange for it commences from a third country, and so on. Where there is not a balance of trade between two countries, i. e. where the mutual imports and exports are not exactly of equal value, gold will go from the country where commodities are dearest, or in other words where it is most plentiful, into the country of exportation, where commodities are cheapest, or in other words where it is least plenty. Hence its effect is always to restore an equilibrium between the prices of commodities in two countries where it is a medium of exchange. The principles which regulate the relative prices of bills of exchange between different nations are next explained. The bills on the greater export country, or payable by it, are always at a premium, she having more money to receive than to pay. The amount of this premium is equivalent, and will be neither more nor less than equivalent to the cost of sending the precious metal itself. The corn laws are severely stigmatized in the section following, and the arguments in support of them exposed and refuted. Of these the first is, that unless a nation depend upon its own soil for its corn, it may be starved by the hostility of its neighbours. This argument is shown to be contrary to history and principle. The next argument refuted is this: that if the merchants and manufacturers enjoy in certain cases the monopoly of the home supply, the farmers and landlords are unjustly dealt with if they have not the same advantage. This argument proves too much, and proceeds upon another mistaken notion, of the manufacturer having extraordinary gains from the protection he enjoys, whereas the only effect of it is to give a greater number of home capitalists employment

in that branch, in lieu of the foreigners whom it excludes. The interests of the landlord and the farmer in keeping up the price of corn are opposite. It is the landlord's interest to have corn dear, because the dearer it is, the smaller a portion of the produce will suffice to replace with its profits, the capital of the farmer, and all the rest is the landlord's. It is the interest of the farmer that corn should be cheap, because on that will greatly depend the lowness of wages. In the succeeding section upon colonial trade it is first argued that the mother country derives no benefit from her exports to the colonies, and therefore whatever benefit she does derive from colonial trade is from the imports, and an improvement is suggested in colonial policy, according to this principle; of allowing the colony to import whence it pleased, but restricting its exports to the mother country.

CONSUMPTION.

IV. The next division is *Consumption*, subdivided into productive and unproductive consumption. In the first are included the necessities of the labourer, machinery and materials. In the second is comprehended all consumption which does not take place to the end that an income or revenue be derived from it. It follows from this that the whole of what is annually produced is annually consumed. Every production belongs to some one and is destined to some use; there are however but two sorts of uses; that for immediate enjoyment, and that for ultimate profit; the first of these is unproductive, the last productive consumption. It is admirably well demonstrated in the next section, that demand and supply must be on the whole exactly equal. Demand implying a wish to purchase and an equivalent to offer, the demand of any man will be equal to what he has produced and does not mean to consume, or in other words, to his power of supply. Of two men who exchange commodities, each comes with both a demand and supply; the commodity of each being at once a demand with respect to himself and a supply with respect to the other. Therefore the terms mean the same thing considered under different views. The case of a glut in any particular commodity does not make against this doctrine, for when such is the case, there is a falling off exactly equal in the quantity of some other commodity:—this latter will therefore rise in price and the superabundant one decline, until the balance is restored

in the usual way, i. e. by persons abandoning the production of the low-priced article, and commencing that of the high-priced one. Some arguments of Malthus on the subject of a general glut are noticed and, I think, convincingly answered at the close of this section (Extent of consumption.) The next subject discussed is taxation, considered in its application to rent, to wages, to all sources of income equally, to commodities, either particular or to them universally, to the farmer, the law, etc. and under this head tithes and poor rates are noticed. Mr. Mill seems to prefer a tax on rent to any other. He reasons in this way :—It would be no hardship on the purchaser of land, who estimates his purchase at the present rent, for the government to appropriate any increase of this to the purposes of the state, supposing it had the power of increasing the rent. That the legislature *has* this power, by means of increasing population and the demand for food, is manifest from the foregoing parts ; so that not only the justice but the practicability of this project seems to follow. Mr. McCulloch's parallel between the increased profits of stock and increased value of land is shown to be quite a fallacy. The two cases, so far from being alike, are reverses. Rent increases with the progress of society ; the profits of stock diminish. Land is originally not the property of any man—capital always is. A tax on the profits of stock would fall exclusively upon the capitalist : it would not affect the power of purchasing farther than by transferring to government what was taken from the capitalists, so that the aggregate would remain the same : there would therefore be the same demand and supply, the same quantity of money and rapidity of circulation ; therefore the value of money would remain the same, and for that reason, prices. A tax on wages will diminish the number of labourers, if wages are at the lowest, until they become high enough to afford the tax. If they are already high enough to afford it, then the tax falls directly on the savings of the labourer. With respect to taxes falling on all sorts of income, Mr. Mill demonstrates, by a very plain analysis, that the fair and only fair measure of this tax is the purchase-value of the different sorts. An *ad valorem* duty upon all commodities would have the effect of raising prices, the author insists. He supposes the members of the community to come to market with the same money as before : one tenth (supposing that to be the amount of the tax,) would be transferred from the producer to the government, and would be immedi-

ately laid out in purchases by the government itself, or come into the hands of the producer once more. I own I do not very clearly see the cogency of this reasoning, and it appears to me that the difficulty is rather increased by the illustration. Perhaps the thing might be explained in this way: Government, in imposing an *ad valorem* duty of one tenth, takes away a tenth of the money of the country out of circulation: thus augmenting the value of the other nine tenths of the money—But this evidently cheapens commodities, so that my process would either prove a fall in price, or what I should myself suppose, that prices would remain stationary. A tax upon corn, it is said, would fall on the consumer exclusively, and not affect the landlord; as his share, though a tax were deducted from it, would rise in value, so that the remainder would exactly compensate him for the tax. A tax on agricultural instruments would raise prices without extending itself to the landlord: therefore his rent would be proportionally increased, and the tax fall upon the consumer; and besides its own amount, the amount also of the increase gained by the landlord. Tithes fall upon the consumer. An acreable tax on cultivated and uncultivated land together would not raise the price of produce, but fall on the landlords: if it were levied on cultivated land only, it would raise prices, increase rent and fall upon the consumers. In the first case, no addition, it is said, will be made to the cost of production; therefore no rise of prices ensues, and the landlord is not indemnified. In the second case, the tax must yield itself and the profits of stock, and is therefore included in the prices. The result is beneficial to the landlord, as he gets the same amount of produce, and that of more value, after as before the tax was levied. It is thus similar in its effect to a tax on agricultural instruments. A tax upon money is stated to have the peculiar effect of falling upon nobody, and therefore ought to be carried to its utmost limit. That limit is the inducement to illicit coining. In the chapter upon the effects of the taxation of commodities upon the value of money, or price, it is laid down that the taxing of commodities has not necessarily the effect of lessening the quantity of foreign trade, but rather by the transit of money, to change the exports.

This section concludes the work. It is evidently written with great ability; with clear and correct views upon many topics hitherto involved in obscurity; and with a precision of language almost mathematical. I make no verbal extract; the substance, all that is to

be regarded in a work of this nature, having been already so much detailed.

CAMPBELL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RHETORIC.

Dublin, Feb. 1, 1826.

DOCTOR CAMPBELL, treating the human mind in its double capacity of agent and of patient, or capable of being acted upon, commences with an inquiry purely metaphysical upon the latter quality, and the powers by which it is influenced :—these are the passions; the rational faculty being only called upon to discover the best media for the accomplishment of the ends to which the passions point; and therefore the great aim of the rhetorician, to which all others must be subservient, is to enlist these on his side. This doctrine is enforced with a good deal of ingenuity and a great mass of sagacious observation brought to support it. I do not think the metaphysics in general of this author are placed on much better evidences than those of his rival theorists; but so it will most likely always be, until the certain footing of first principles is ascertained. The comparison between moral and mathematical chains of reasoning, however, appears to be executed with singular ability and tends greatly to uphold the evidences of the former; not so as to give them superior or equal value with those on which the stricter sciences rest, but as claiming for them a much nearer approach to these than is commonly allowed.

The second part is the purely rhetorical one, and follows as a legitimate converse from what precedes. It is, after ascertaining the assailable points in the human mind, giving us the weapons wherewith to approach them with the most confidence of success. This dissertation required copious examples, and the author's good taste and extensive acquirements produce many of the very best kinds from those writers, ancient and modern, whose sway over the human mind is most uncontested. The doctrine here in-

culcated of convincing to please, instead of pleasing to convince, is, if well founded, a useful lesson to some composers to reverse their means and ends, and not to entertain so high an opinion of their readers or hearers as to hope that they will be swayed by their understandings alone. The last portion of the work is devoted to grammar, with which it comes tardily off indeed : the dissertation upon this subject is so prolix, and subdivided into so many minute sections, that not only did it leave no impression on me itself, but almost effaced that of all that went before, much of which I really admired and wished to retain.

So rigorous a critic of style as Dr. Campbell, necessarily challenges close observation upon his own. He has the merit, I think, of perspicuity and cadence, but is often censurable on the score of purity. He both uses words in an unusual meaning and coins others.

On the whole I should suppose the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* sufficiently justified its title to be a useful book of reference, and it contains besides so much of that desideratum, a rational logic, as to show in what manner a work exclusively on that subject should be constructed.

I extract a part of some very just objections against the syllogistic form of reasoning, for my quotation.

“ ‘ All animals feel ;
All horses are animals,
Therefore all horses feel.’ ”

“ It is impossible that any reasonable man, who really doubts whether a horse has feeling or is a mere automaton, should be convinced by this argument. For, supposing he uses the names of *horse* and *animal* as standing in the same relation of species and genus, which they bear in the common acceptation of the words, the argument you employ is, in effect, but an affirmative of the point which he denies, but couched in such terms as to include a multitude of other similar affirmatives, which, whether true or false, are nothing to the purpose. Thus *all animals feel*, is only a compendious expression for *all horses feel*, *all dogs feel*, *all camels feel*, *all eagles feel*, and so through the whole animal creation. I affirm, besides, that the procedure here is from things less known to things better known. It is possible that one may

believe the conclusion who denies the major : but the reverse is not possible; for, to express myself in the language of the art, that may be predicated of the species, which is not predicable of the genus; but that can never be predicated of the genus, which is not predicable of the species. If one, therefore, were under such an error with regard to brutes, true logic, which is always coincident with good sense, would lead our reflections to the indications of perception and feeling, given by these animals, and the remarkable conformity which in this respect, and in respect of their hodily organs, they bear to our own species."

Vol. 1. P. 146-7.

SEGUR'S RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

OF 1812.

Dublin, Feb. 3, 1826.

I READ this account in a very bad translation, and with most of the remarkable events which it relates, impressed on my mind with tolerable distinctness by the very able work of Labaume. Nevertheless, so unparalleled were all the incidents, and so tremendous the consequences of this expedition, that one studies the details of the Comte de Ségur with almost as deep an interest as was felt in the first, fresh outline of his predecessor. Every sovereign infected with ambitious tendencies, should make this narrative, as Alexander did the works of Homer, his constant study and companion. Herein he will learn that monarchies, like all human works, have their impassable limits; that the world can never be reduced to the dominion of one master; that when his species shrinks from opposing the conqueror's encroachments, the hand of nature will be stretched forth to wield her invincible weapons against him; to remind him of his littleness and his temerity, and to strike him down into the abysses of irretrievable ruin. The character of the individual who has sacrificed himself the latest in

teaching this lesson, is fully developed by Ségur; but he does not solve the enigma which it presents to the curious : the contradictions and inconsistency which marked it are still more strikingly exhibited. Full of irascibility upon petty occasions, yet witnessing the annihilation of the finest army ever organized without an accent or gesture of impatience; habitually regardless of the lives of men, except as a means to an end, yet losing the benefit of the only pitched battle of the Russian campaign—and a battle which he sought for with all the ardour of his temperament—by an obstinate refusal to send forward re-enforcements at Borodino, and so to convert an orderly retreat into a rout; a fatalist upon system, yet employing as much resource as if he were himself the arbiter of his destiny. Such was Bonaparte, the indigenous production of a soil heated to such intensity as was revolutionary France; himself re-acting upon his times, and one to whom the world may expect a parallel at the completion of the Platonic cycle, and not before.

Le Comte de Ségur is thoroughly a Frenchman of the new school. As the armies of his country were always affecting the ancient models in their warfare, so he affects their style in his composition. Neither imitation is very successful. The plainness and severity of the antique exemplars ill assort with the factitious decorations of French taste, and this is equally true whether applied to their political institutions, their literature, or their costume. This author especially apes the Livy and the Tacitus, in his discriminations of individual character,—in the distinguishing eloquence he puts into the mouth of each of his personages, and the dramatic contrasts in which they are always exhibited. Hence Murat, the soldier of chivalrous times, is usually placed in contiguity to Davoust, the calculating tactician, and so of the others. Ney however combines the admirable qualities dispersed through the rest, and appears quite the *Bayard* of the campaign : the *chevalier sans tache et sans reproche*. Making all due allowance for this aspiration after effect, and consequent tendency to exaggerate, one cannot indeed help admiring Ney. His retreat from Moscow to Wilna turns the Anabasis into a mere commonplace. This book is curious too in another point of view—as exhibiting the human character in so uncommon an aspect. It would seem that excessive calamity, like excessive drinking, has the effect of magnifying the master passion of the human soul and bringing it exclusively into prominence. The French

army, in their retreat, displayed either virtues more than heroic or vices worse than savage.

The following quotation is taken from the commencement of the account of the conflagration at Moscow.

“ Two officers had taken up their quarters in one of the buildings of the Kremlin. The view hence embraced the north and west of the city. About midnight they were awakened by an extraordinary light. They looked and beheld palaces filled with flames, which at first merely illuminated, but presently consumed these elegant and noble structures. They observed that the north wind drove these flames directly towards the Kremlin, and became alarmed for the safety of that fortress in which the flower of their army and its commander reposed. They were apprehensive also for the surrounding houses, where our soldiers, attendants, and horses, weary and exhausted, were doubtless buried in profound sleep. Sparks and burning fragments were already flying over the roofs of the Kremlin, when the wind, shifting from north to west, blew them in another direction.

“ One of these officers, relieved from apprehension respecting his corps, then composed himself again to sleep, exclaiming, ‘ Let others look to it now ; ’tis no affair of ours.’ For such was the unconcern produced by the multiplicity of events and misfortunes, and such the selfishness arising from excessive suffering and fatigue, that they left to each only just strength and feeling sufficient for his personal service and preservation.

“ It was not long before fresh and vivid lights again awoke them. They beheld other flames rising precisely in the new direction which the wind had taken towards the Kremlin, and they cursed French imprudence and want of discipline, to which they imputed this disaster. But three times did the wind thus change from north to west, and three times did these hostile fires, as if obstinately bent on the destruction of the imperial quarters, appear eager to follow this new direction.

“ At this sight a strong suspicion seized their minds. Can the Muscovites, aware of our rash and thoughtless negligence, have conceived the hope of burning with Moscow our soldiers, heavy with wine, fatigue and sleep ; or rather, have they dared to imagine that they should involve Napoleon in this catastrophe : that the loss

of such a man would be fully equivalent to that of their capital ; that it was a result sufficiently important to justify the sacrifice of all Moscow to obtain it ; that perhaps Heaven, in order to grant them so signal a victory, had decreed so great a sacrifice ; and lastly that so immense a colossus required a not less immense funeral pile ?

“ Whether this was their plan we cannot tell, but nothing less than the Emperor’s good fortune was required to prevent its being realized. In fact, not only did the Kremlin contain, unknown to us, a magazine of gunpowder ; but that very night, the guards, asleep and carelessly posted, suffered a whole park of artillery to enter and draw up under the windows of Napoleon.

“ It was at this moment that the furious flames were driven from all quarters with the greatest violence towards the Kremlin ; for the wind, attracted no doubt by this vast combustion, increased every moment in strength. The flower of the army and the Emperor would have been destroyed, if but one of the brands that flew over our heads had alighted on one of the powder waggons. Thus upon each of the sparks that were for several hours floating in the air, depended the fate of the whole army.”

V. 2. P. 40, 41, 42.

GRANBY.

Dublin, January 25 to February 4, 1826.

THE disappointments incident to circulating libraries explain the interval comprised between the two above dates. In fact these three volumes were despatched in little more than double the number of hours : they constitute a mere commonplace, preferring no claim to originality of either fable or character : two lovers, interesting and constant, *more solito* ; an anti-hero, vindictive and plotting, but finally frustrated, *more solito* likewise ; a clever satirical quizzer, the supreme *arbiter elegantiarum*, the most laboured and most unsuccessful delineation of all ; a blue-stocking lady ; sundry parents, cousins and visitors ; a young gentleman, very amiable, but ad-

dicted to gambling and falling in love. These constitute the principal performers.

Of the incidents, the most prominent are the various machinations of rivals and interested relatives to counteract the elective affinities of the two principal substances. The emergence of the hero from comparative lowliness of station, to title and affluence, after a mystery is duly cleared up and a starch piece of nobility opportunely sent to kingdom come : some drawing-room sketches, and—(is it conceivable that a book eked out with such an incident should reach a second edition in 1826?) a fall of the heroine from a spirited horse, and her rescue by the gallantry of an admirer!

What is to be said in praise of this novel is disposable of in brief. It is written in a tolerably good style : it does not, that I am aware of, violate any rule of grammar, and effuses its superficial triteness with a perspicuity quite irreproachable.

I do not think Granby can contain a fair representation of high life. Trebeck, in whose person is centered the largest claims to fashion and caste, is a most inveterate egotist : a character that certainly *ought* not to be tolerated in good society.

I shall not devote a virgin page to the purpose of extracting.

PHANTASMAGORIA.

February, 5—8, 1826.

THERE is just as much of really good matter in these two volumes as might furnish forth the lighter constituents of a single month's magazine : this being dilated and joined to so much of what has less merit, or none at all, as suffices to fill six hundred pages, a very indifferent sum-total of a book is the consequence : a book of which the besetting fault is over-writing ; that indefatigable straining after effect ; that replenishment of the ear to the destitution of the mind, which is the habitual sin of almost all modern light writing. So general is this fault become, that in reprehending, I am obliged to commit it : in varying the forms of my animadversions, I am ex-

pending the same multiplicity of words upon a single idea, that I censure in the authors.

I have already said that there is some merit in this writer. He is possessed of a certain degree of humour, which, although neither exuberant nor original, gives considerable relish to those stories whose characteristic it is. The boarding-school correspondence is an instance :—the young lady's letter to her confidante in this sketch is really excellent. The tale from which the forthcoming extract is taken is another instance to the same effect, and the extract itself contains a very pleasant satire upon the extravagant school of novel-writers. Recollecting by the way that this same extract conjoined with my original remarks, will require as much space as the *Phantasmagoria* deserves, I proceed to give it without further comment.

“During the six months occupied in the composition of my novel, I was in a Fool's Paradise.—I existed in my father's house, but I lived only with my heroes and heroines; and their joys and sorrows were the only things that really interested me. At last, the darling work was completed, and though the reader must excuse my enlarging on the proof which it afforded of my original talent, I can honestly assure him, that it bore unquestionable evidence to the goodness of my memory, and the extent, if not the excellence of my studies. To parody two well known lines—

‘My work was an essence compounded with art,
From the weakest and worst of all other men's books.’

“But fortunately for me, plagiarism was not considered such a ‘high crime and misdemeanour’ as it is in the present day, neither had my book the disadvantage of being read by friends with troublesome memories, two things which enabled me to retain peaceable possession of all the ‘fine passages’ pilfered from every novel within reach. Certainly, no masquerade ever exhibited a greater variety of characters than was assembled in my two volumes; German ghosts, English lords, Italian robbers, French waiting-women, and heroes and heroines whose local habitation ought to have been the moon. The incidents were equally multifarious and well-arranged; beggars metamorphosed into lords, and lords

metamorphosed into beggars; lovers left dead at one place, to be found alive in another; marriages broken off at the altar, agonizing distresses, interesting confessions, the whole diversified with love scenes and love letters, flaming enough to scorch the eyes of the reader."

V. 2. P. 248-9.

THE STORY OF A LIFE.

Feb. 9, 1826.

I SHOULD guess this to be the production of a very young and a very ill-educated man; of heated temperament, depraved taste, and unsound judgment. There is a warmth of colouring in the female portraits, and a character of sensuality throughout, that suggest the first suppositions—while the biblical cant by which the gospel-greedy appetite of these times is catered for, by no means tends to weaken them; for it is evidently an excrescence, introduced *ad captandum*, and apparently uncongenial to the author's tastes. Mr. Maturin appears to be his great model; but he far outdoes the bag-ridden conceptions of his prototype: there is nothing to be sure of supernatural agency, but its absence is supplied by the aid of all that is most preposterously improbable for earthly instrumentality to effect.

It is for its style and language however, that the 'Story of a Life' defies the competition of all moderns, and may boldly enter the lists against the heroicks of Ancient Pistol himself. The book must be read before an adequate idea can be formed of the forced inversions, the clumsy coinages, the uncouth compounds, by which it affects the sublime, but achieves only the ridiculous.

This is unsparing censure and might be still increased without exceeding truth, and yet I should not say that this writer, (supposing him to be young,) is quite irreclaimable. He has vigour of imagination, and consequently describes with considerable force. He is never tedious:—if the scenes are coarsely painted, they are quickly shifted: if the groupings are ungraceful, they are generally stri-

king, and never keep their positions long enough to fatigue us. It is perhaps for these reasons that the attention is kept alive throughout, and the calm disapprobation of our judgment, and the more active disgust of our taste, are alike unheeded in their admonitions to leave the book unfinished.

I have marked a paragraph which, though taken almost at hazard and but short, will exemplify most of what I have observed.

“He had struck, it seemed, the black cook, and had upset the food, and insulted the serang. Again all was silence, as, amid the hushed crowd, the two accusers told their tale; a muttered something fell from the prisoner, but the dead silence awed him, and he felt fear, and the savage eye looked apprehension. The Rais drew up his smoke calmly and slow, and the long gurgle echoed loud; and then a still smile just passed across his face, and he gave a motion with his hand, and they tied the prisoner's arms behind him, and pressed him into a kneeling posture; and a large African came forward, and his eyes rolled white, and he raised the shining blade, and the hideous head fell to the death-stroke, and sea-water was thrown upon the bloody spot; and the huge body was cast into the ocean, and the fierce head stuck upon a fixed spike on the deck, and all dispersed, and washed their hands, and gathered round the mats and trays, and dipped their hands into their messes, and laughed as they looked up at the grisly warning.”

Vol. 1. P. 304-5.

DE STAEL'S LETTERS ON ENGLAND.

Feb. 17, 1826.

M. DE STAEL, like his eminent relative, is a great theorist, but with rather less devotedness to his particular opinions than she evinced for her's. When any of these stubborn obstacles which will throw themselves athwart the smoothest career, impede his progress; if he cannot satisfactorily surmount them, he leaves to

his reader the determination as to whether, notwithstanding their force, the course he points out be not on the whole the best. Mde. De Staël on the contrary, never stopped short or turned back—if she could not open upon a detour, she laboured vigorously up the ascent, and that gained, carried the mind of her reader impetuously down the vantage ground thus acquired. This is the most picturesque method of travelling, but the other, certainly the safest.

These letters commence with a very able exposure of the utter delusions into which a person must fall who should reason respecting England *à priori*, without using the utmost circumspection in examining all the circumstances, whether conflicting or concurrent, by whose agency existing effects are produced. Then follows a comparison of the civilization and intellectual progress of England and of France. The author supposes that the diffusion of cultivation is on the side of England, but is of opinion, that there are a smaller number of persons of remarkable intellectual endowments with us than in France. In proof of the prejudice of the English people in favour of existing customs, and their unwillingness to innovate, the two parliamentary debates, that upon the marriage act, and the one on the admission of the catholic peers to the Upper House, are adduced. From this dislike of change however, a very beneficial result is admitted to follow—that when an alteration or abolition of an abuse is forced upon the good sense of the English, it is for a permanency—not as in France, a measure adopted to-day and rescinded tomorrow. The national attachment of the English to their law of primogeniture is shown by some amusing examples. This law is very energetically attacked by the author. His arguments against those upon which its expediency rests; are very able, and the more satisfactory as being altogether derived from experiment. He is, I think, quite triumphant in rejecting Ireland as supplying evidence on the question; for, as he remarks, nothing can be more unlike an actual proprietorship than our small cotter tenancies. He refers to the actual state of France and Switzerland in proof that the supposed tendency of the subdivision of property would not have the apprehended consequence of too rapidly increasing population in the lower classes. With respect to the upper orders, he contends, that population among them is rather encouraged by the rule of primogeniture; for, says he, a great man, knowing that the splendour of his name must be sup-

ported by his eldest son, is less anxious about his other children, and hence the ages of himself and his wife form the *only limit* to their number. This is a curious argument, and I think a weak one. It is curious however, as affording a glimpse of continental morals and a reason perhaps, why the subdivision of property there, does *not* produce its natural effects. With regard to the political influence of the division of property, the author frankly, but sorrowfully admits, that our system is the best adapted to resist the encroachments of power—and this admission looks very like a surrender of the whole question. After noticing the several incongruities in the English character from their respect for rank on the one hand, and their tenacity of liberty on the other, M. De Staël comes to the conclusion that the English are the most aristocratical people in Europe, but thanks Heaven that equality is prevailing there as everywhere else. A well managed comparison between the French and English press succeeds in order, and a merry peal is rung for the demise of the constitutional association. It is needless to say to which side of the channel the advantage in literary freedom is awarded.

After a very animated representation of a county meeting and a passing sketch of Cobbett, we are led to the two Houses of parliament, and the work concludes with an analysis of their constitution and forms. The question of reform is incidentally discussed and a sketch of Mr. Bentham's theory on the subject, given. I do not well understand it, but the author condemns it and indeed, to every appearance, all other proposed schemes of reform. He however modestly proposes one change as of beneficial tendency, that is, to place the elective franchise in the hands of richer and more enlightened citizens, by raising the qualification and including moveable as well as fixed property within it. A comparison of the modes of debating and enacting laws in the French and British senates, in which all the advantages for the preservation of liberty, for expedition and convenience, are allowed to us, terminates the book. M. De Staël is so inimical to the French forms of legislation, that his very last paragraph is a declaration that liberty is not to be hoped for in that country while they prevail.

This is a summary of a very superior work—a work bespeaking uncommon powers of observation and reflection, and bringing to bear on every question that spirit of candour and liberality, of all

other qualities, the most conducive to the elucidation of truth. The style is a little gaudy—not very much so, however, considering it is by a Frenchman, and addressed to French people—but the subjects are unfortunately of a character to make almost every attempt at decoration out of place.

The following is the very judicious commencement of the second Letter.

“ We cannot take a survey of England with an unprejudiced mind, without being compelled to acknowledge, that civilization is there further advanced than in any country on the Continent ; that knowledge is more widely diffused, the science of government better understood, and all the movements of the social machine more rapid and more ably combined. These are facts that might be established *à priori*, and are fully demonstrated by experience. To deny them would be in some degree to dispute the importance of all the political institutions, that have employed for ages the meditations of the sage and the efforts of nations. If a country enjoying for a series of years a free constitution, in which the people have taken a part in the direction of affairs and the administration of justice, where they are enlightened by the freedom of the press, where every path is open to the pursuit of the unshackled mind, do not excel in knowledge those that have groaned under military despotism, or vegetated beneath the sway of mistresses and favourites ; we must renounce the study of politics as a science, and assert that human affairs are governed by blind chance, or ascribe to nations those privileges of birth, that we justly dispute in individuals. I am far from denying altogether the influence of descent ; but he cannot have studied history, who would put this influence into the scale as a balance to the power of institutions, and it appears to me as little the prerogative of a nation as of a gentleman, to know every thing without learning anything.”

P. 17, 18.

REID'S TRAVELS IN IRELAND.

March 1—8, 1826.

THIS is a book bespeaking a good understanding and liberal feeling in its author. A great many of its suggestions for the advantage of this unhappy country have subsequently been adopted by the legislature or are under consideration at the present time : the alteration in the tithe system ; the relief of under tenants from successive distresses, and the extension of education among the poorer classes, are instances in point. In my opinion the author might have rendered his work still more valuable by contracting its plan. History, politics, economy and statistics are rather too many subjects to be comprised and properly discussed within the compass of a thin octavo. If the details be unfinished, it is however no slight praise to have traced a correct outline. The materials for the book under review were collected in the memorable year of 1822, and the events of that disastrous period, being noted on the spot, are described with that vividness which the fresh transcripts of recent observation usually possess. The detail of the sufferings endured by the people in the south and west of Ireland during that summer, must be almost incredible to the inhabitant of happier countries, but my own experience leads me to believe that it is quite unexaggerated.

From a mere journal like this, it is difficult to find any passage suited to extraction. After a long search I have at length selected for that purpose the commencement of the chapter upon tithes.

“ It has been attempted to trace the origin of tithes back to very ancient times—to the Jews, with a view, it would seem, to establish a divine authority in support of its right ; but the sanction of antiquity, even were such to be the case, cannot justify the continuance of a custom which is at variance with the best notions of human right. The tithe dues of modern times are, moreover, essentially different from those ordained by the law of Moses. In the division of lands among the Jewish tribes, the Levites, having been expressly ap-

pointed to the priesthood, in order that they should be exempt from the duties of war and all secular cares, gave their portion in common among their brethren, and received in return the *tithe*, the division of which stood thus :—the priests had one tenth, and the remaining nine-tenths were reserved for the rest of the Levites, and for the poor, the stranger, the widow, the orphan, and the temple.

“ Tithes, however, under the Christian dispensation, were not instituted in any decided way till the fifth century : previous to that period the example of the apostles and the primitive pastors of the church proves that no such custom prevailed. In Ireland, particularly, it continued to be unknown for several centuries after the introduction of the gospel, as is shown in the first part of this volume, in the instance of Malachias, bishop of Armagh, whose life was fashioned after the manner of the apostles, an excellent subject of imitation, both then and since. Even at the period when tithes were first allowed by common consent, and before their payment became enforced by law, their appropriation, as may be seen by referring to the place just mentioned, arose originally from a charitable intention on the part of the donors, and was received by the clergy in a spirit, at least, of disinterestedness.” *P. 344-5.*

A PICTURE OF GREECE

IN 1825.

March 8—10, 1826.

WITH the Duke of York for King ; Eldon and Peel for ministers ; and Wellington and Anglesea for generals ;—a concurrence not at all improbable—who will be bold enough to guarantee the Irish catholic against being goaded into a struggle for his very existence ? With such a possibility in our contemplation, with how much interest beyond passive commiseration must we watch the events of the existing contest between Greece and Turkey ; a contest exhibiting in most particulars such a striking parallelism to our own case

in the event supposed? The liberation of South America, so promptly and so gloriously achieved, affords much, to be sure, to cheer the hopes of all political sufferers; but that was an instance coming less home to our business and bosoms than the present one. The vast extent of South America, her remoteness from her oppressors, their weakness and humiliation in Europe; the co-operation afforded by the different states to each other in their almost simultaneous effort, are all circumstances peculiar to that revolution. But Greece, like Ireland, geographically placed in close adjacency to her tyrants;—Greece opposing insubordinate and undisciplined troops to forces organized and acting on the models of civilized Europe; her leaders divided amongst themselves; some inefficient and some corrupt; the short-lived enthusiasm of the people subsiding into unconcern and apathy—presents in all these points a striking resemblance to what would naturally be to be expected amongst us, if engaged in hostility with Great Britain; so that the history of her contest should be read by us not for entertainment or curiosity merely; but studied for instruction. Her exploits should serve as stimulus and her errors for warning, should the day ever arrive when we shall be compelled to enter upon the same career.

The Picture of Greece in 1825, comprises the several narratives of Mr. Emerson, Count Pecchio, and Mr. Humphrys. Their literary claims and their supply of information are in the same rank of merit as of priority. They are sufficiently dissimilar to preclude all suspicion of collusion in their writers, and these being apparently intelligent, practical men, their agreement together gives great weight to all their opinions in which it is to be found. Happily, one coincidence seems to be, that the Greeks will never again be subjugated as a nation to the Turks: the breach is too wide to be reparable. The Turks may perhaps overrun the plains and garrison the towns, but nature's fortresses, the rock and the mountain, must ever remain impregnable. But is even this partial reconquest to be expected? This is a question of formidable difficulty. If the Greeks fail in engaging any European power to interfere in their behalf; if they still continue to weaken their resources by faction; if they persist in their repugnance to forming themselves into regular troops and so go on opposing the improved tactics of the Turks, with undisciplined and unruly and precarious levies; if the large

loans continue to be perverted from the public use to the purposes of private speculation, then indeed must the regeneration of Greece be pronounced to be desperate. On the other hand, should any European nation heartily espouse their cause, or should they be fortunate enough to import a man (for no native will answer the purpose) who unites moral character, military talents, high birth and command of pecuniary resources in a sufficient degree to ensure their respect, and to attach them to him as their leader, then every thing might be hoped for : without one or other of these events, even the expulsion of the Turks, should it miraculously be effected, would produce but little immediate benefit, as it would be merely an exchange of foreign for intestine warfare, of which the period or manner of its termination would equally defy all conjecture.

I extract from Mr. Emerson's journal a description of the brûlots, or fireships so formidable to the Turkish navy.

“ Their construction, as fireships, is very simple, nothing more being wanted than active combustion. For this purpose, the ribs, hold, and sides of the vessel, after being well tarred, are lined with dried furze, dipped in pitch and lees of oil, and sprinkled with sulphur; a number of hatchways are then cut along the deck, and under each is placed a small barrel of gunpowder; so that at the moment of conflagration each throws off its respective hatch, and giving ample vent to the flames, prevents the deck being too soon destroyed by the explosion.

“ A train which passes through every part of the ship, and communicates with every barrel, running round the deck and passing out at the steerage window, completes the preparation below; whilst above, every rope and yard is well covered with tar, so as speedily to convey the flames to the sails; and at the extremity of each yard-arm is attached a wickered hook, which being once entangled with the enemy's rigging, renders escape, after coming in contact, almost a matter of impossibility. The train, to prevent accidents, is never laid till the moment of using it; when all being placed in order, and the wind favourable, with every possible sail set, so as to increase the flames, she bears down upon the enemy's line, whilst the crew, usually twenty five or thirty in number, have no other defence than crouching behind the after-bulwarks.

When close upon the destined ship, all hands descend by the stern, into a launch fitted out for the purpose, with high gunwales and a pair of small swivels; and, at the moment of contact, the train is fired by the Captain, and every hatch being thrown off, the flames burst forth, at the same instant, from stem to stern; and ascending by the tarred ropes and sails, soon communicate with the rigging of the enemy's vessel, who have never yet, in one instance, been able to extricate themselves." *V. 1. P. 169, 170.*

JOURNAL ANECDOTIQUE

DE MADAME CAMPAN.

March 12—15, 1826.

THIS volume is divided into three parts : the first containing some of the most remarkable observations, chiefly political, made by Madame Campan either to the editor, (M. Maigne,) or in his presence, for the last few years of her life; followed by an account of her last illness and death. The second part is appropriated to her letters, principally addressed to her son; and the third and concluding division consists of an essay upon female education.

It is a striking, but not inexplicable fact, how much politics engage the minds of all persons in France at the present day, and how completely they seem to have usurped the place of those levities to which polite conversation was formerly restricted. Every Frenchman, and still more every Frenchwoman aiming at conversational honours, commences by an analysis of the causes of the French revolution; follows it up by some antithetical bombast about Bonaparte, summing up the whole with an outline of a constitution dogmatically asserted to be suitable to all the wants and wishes of France, and digested in the presumption and ignorance of the inventor's own self-sufficient head. This is not wonderful. They are fresh from a mighty experiment which has left behind it all things unsettled and unascertained. Hence constitution-making is still a speculative matter with them, bitterly convinced as they

have become of the errors of their old system, but not prepared for the substitution of a new one, free from its defects : the subject therefore becomes an inexhaustible mine from whence to derive paradox and empiricism,—just what the vain heart of a man ambitious of dazzling and surprising could desire. To us, whose constitutional machinery, if not perfect in all its operations, is at least essentially well organized, and performs its functions with regularity, it is exceedingly ridiculous to hear the solemn conceited prattle of our neighbouring sciologists, those *seri studiosorum* who talk nonsense in antithesis and truisms in apophthegms. While the craft is exercised by the men alone, we have however some patience. If they are ignorant of the theory, they are entitled to some consideration as having had act and part in the greatest experiment of all history. But for an old *femme de chambre*, a creature whose best days were passed in performing the ridiculous and debasing ceremonial of the court of Louis XV. and XVI. ; for *her* to talk sentences about laws, and administrations, and constitutions—that is really carrying the joke too far.

Madame Campan offers some redemption for this in that portion of the book, comprehended under the second and third divisions. Her letters to her son are written in a very maternal spirit—with great solicitude for the preservation of his morals and his advancement in the world. Economy in the management of his pecuniary resources is very much inculcated—perhaps we should say too much so, did we not consider how natural it was for a person who had witnessed and survived the French Revolution, and who had felt the privations consequent upon the destruction of property with which it was accompanied, to form, (if such were possible,) even an over-estimate of the blessings of competence.

The essay upon education is still better and generates so much good will towards its author, that one is inclined to change his anger into regret at her ever stepping beyond her proper province, and that too, so valuable a one as it is. She appears to have scrutinized with even a philosophic eye, the development and maturation of the human intellect, and relates some very interesting anecdotes of what occurred within her own experience on the subject. She is a great advocate for public education in preference to private—To be sure where should such an advocate be expected if not in the principal of a great national seminary ?—but her reasons of

preference are solid upon principle, and if every establishment were conducted upon the same plan as she adopted, there would be perhaps little to advance on the other side. I transcribe a paragraph upon this question.

“ Si l'éducation particulière est donnée avec sévérité , elle devient tyrannique , n'ayant pas pour point d'appui ces grands et sensibles châtimens qu'amènent la publicité , cette privation de récompense , châtiment muet qui attire une honte réelle sans être diffamante. On sera obligé de gronder sans cesse et d'accumuler de petites privations puisées dans les habitudes et les plaisirs de la société : l'esprit, le jugement, le génie, tout doit en souffrir. *Rien n'y est grand, ni dans la récompense ni dans les peines.* Si l'enfant élevé au sein de sa famille, favorisé par la nature, dirigé par un homme instruit, obtient de véritables succès, *les éloges qui l'environneront seront bien plus sûrement au-dessus de son mérite. Comptant sur une supériorité dont il ne peut juger la véritable force, puisqu'il ne l'a mesurée avec personne, et que la tendresse, la flatterie et l'adulation la lui auront exagérée,* il paraîtra dans le monde avec la confiance et l'assurance d'un homme instruit, et fera dans la société ce qu'il aurait dû faire pendant les années de son éducation, *l'apprentissage de la supériorité des autres.* Enfin, où sont les précepteurs des savans et des auteurs illustres qui ont honoré la France ? Qui a formé Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Voltaire, Buffon, etc. ? On vous répond par des noms de colléges fameux.”

P. 196-7.

MADAME DE GENLIS—MÉMOIRES,

TOMES 7, 8.

March, 16—21, 1826.

MADAME DE GENLIS, has completed her memoirs and her eightieth year almost contemporaneously, after bidding fair to die, like Werther, pen-in-hand. These two concluding volumes have nothing

very distinguishable from their precursors. Like them they are of a miscellaneous character, partly matter of fact, partly critical, and partly consisting of quotations. It appears to me that there is something like an incongruity between antecedents and consequences in the detail of facts respecting the author personally, that places their authenticity in a very questionable point. At least this much is certain, that if Madame De Genlis, (as she says she did,) passed all the years of her wealth and influence in doing acts of munificence, and if, when the power of conferring pecuniary benefits ceased, she continued to bestow what remained to her, her sympathy and her attentions, with equal profusion on her friends, then must Madame De Genlis be considered as the most unfortunate woman in her connections and friendships that ever existed. Take the present Orleans family for an example. Not only was there never heard of such a governess as she represents herself to have made to them, but very few mothers have ever acquitted themselves towards their children with equal perfection. Yet now is this family reinstated in their dignity and fortune—become the very next branch to the succession of the French crown—holding court at the Palais Royal, while the modeller of their characters, and the preserver of their lives, at eighty years of age is going about from lodging to lodging in Paris, because she is too indigent to command the comforts necessary to her age and infirmities! Nor is this to be explained by their forgetfulness of her, or by one of those misunderstandings which sometimes disunite the best cemented friendships. There is a regular reciprocation of civilities at the stated periods, between the parties, which would be considered as proofs of an amicable relation, were not Madame De Genlis's circumstances such as to make the Duke of Orleans's presents of bonbons look more like a cruel mockery than a kindness. The same thing is observable as to other persons of distinction. They visit her; pay her high-flown compliments in prose and verse and receive equivalents in kind; send some valueless present or other, upon her festival day, and are then lauded to the skies in the memoirs. Meanwhile, Madame De Genlis pinches for want—*laudatur et alget*. Surely there is something in all this more than meets the ear.

The critical parts of this work throughout, and of these two volumes in particular, are upon the whole the best. Her notions upon French literature are in the abstract judicious and well ex-

pressed ; but her prejudices against the philosophers and her adulation of her friends, deprive her criticisms of much value when applied to either of these classes. Her observations upon English authors are quite national ; that is both ridiculous and impudent. The only one of Shakspeare's plays mentioned (perhaps because the only one she ever read,) is extravagantly praised for an imputed sentiment which is not only not Shakspeare's, but the very reverse of what is. Lord Byron and the Scotch novels are summarily and contemptuously despatched. The irreligion of the former is fairly reprobated ; but we are told his vogue will not be lasting ; and as to Sir Walter Scott, he has no imagination ! In consequence probably of some friendly hint on the subject, she however makes a sort of apology towards the close of her book for this sentence, — admitting its hastiness and promising to reconsider it. *

I am glad these memoirs are wound up. They are sufficiently well written to stimulate without satisfying the literary appetite. Some of the anecdotes are very amusing, and the remarks upon society, fashion, etc., better than merely amusing. But there is something revoltingly improbable in such a termination to a life spent as Mde. De Genlis says hers has been ; so as quite to destroy all confidence in her fidelity.

MÉMOIRES DU PRINCE EUGÈNE

DE SAVOIE.

March 25-26, 1826.

THE PRINCE EUGENE has left after him a very excellent and characteristic book ; written, to all appearance, *currente calamo* ; full of the vivacity which actual observation imparts to description, and evincing a generosity and frankness of spirit in the author, peculiarly suitable to the character of a soldier. Nor do his claims to

* Le roi s'avisera.

literary reputation rest here : having been endued with a most sagacious insight into human nature, and an admirable dexterity in moulding its weaknesses to his own purposes, he was almost as much employed in negotiation as in war; and the exercise of his pacific talents enables him to afford his reader a most agreeable variety in the relation of those incidents upon which they were employed. The subject-matter of this memoir is skilfully diversified with the description of battles and sieges and remarks at once new, profound and well expressed, upon the abstractions of human character and conduct, so as to infuse a very rare degree of animation into the whole, which only disappoints the reader by its abrupt close.

The Prince Eugene entered the Austrian service in 1683, being then twenty years of age : his first service was at the siege of Vienna by the Turks in the same year, and its reward, the command of a regiment of dragoons. He was henceforward actively engaged in the Turkish war, until its termination by the peace of Carlowitz in 1689. The Austrians having gained the battle of Mohatz in 1687, chiefly by the valour of Eugene and his cavalry, he was made bearer of the news to Vienna; received the picture of the emperor Leopold 1st. from his own hand, and the appointment of Lieutenant-General. In the following year he commenced his diplomatic career by a mission to his cousin Victor Amadeus Duke of Savoy, whom he succeeded in inducing to join the Austrian interests, by a combination of expedients addressed to the weaknesses and vices of his character. In 1690, the Prince united his forces to those of the Duke of Savoy, and they were jointly defeated by Marshal Catinat, at Villa Franca, after an unsuccessful attempt on the Prince's part to dissuade his colleague from risking a battle. The war was carried on in Savoy with various success, but on the whole to the disadvantage of the Prince's party, until 1696, when the Duke of Savoy made a truce with the French and the Prince marched once more against his old enemies the Turks, in Hungary. Here he gained the battle of Zenta in contravention of an order from the emperor not to engage; repaired to Vienna with the intelligence, but instead of being joyfully received as he expected, he was deprived of his sword and threatened with a trial : the populace however showing some insurrectionary symptoms, the emperor relented, and the Prince returned to the command; making a campaign with which he was greatly

discontented, and passed the year 1700, (one of general peace,) at Vienna.

In 1701 the war for the Spanish succession broke out, and the Prince assumed the command in Italy. He was at first opposed to his old antagonist Catinat, and then successively to Villeroi and Vendôme, at the head of the French troops. The result of the operations in Italy was not very favourable to the Austrian arms, the Prince having been obliged to raise the siege of Mantua.

The campaign of 1704 is memorable for the battle of Blenheim in Bavaria, in which Eugene commanded the Austrians. In the succeeding year he returned into Italy to the relief of his wavering relation, the Duke of Savoy, and there learned the death of the Emperor Leopold Ist. and the succession of his son Joseph Ist. A sharp engagement took place between the Prince and the Duke of Vendôme at the passage of the Adda. Both sides claimed the victory; the reader is of course disposed to concede it to the Austrians. In 1706, the Prince relieved Turin, besieged by La Feuillade who, to the Prince's great satisfaction, superseded Vendôme in the command of the French. This was effected after a pitched battle, the most obstinately disputed, the Prince says, of any he ever saw. In 1707 after signing a convention for the evacuation of Italy by the French, the Prince was very unwillingly withdrawn from a meditated enterprise upon Toulon, to take the command on the Rhine. The year 1708 opened with a visit paid by the Prince to the Dutch government and several of the German princes, in order to preserve the alliance unbroken. The battle of Oudenarde, gained by the Austrians and English under the Prince and Marlborough, was the first and most memorable exploit of this campaign. The siege of Lille followed. This city surrendered to the Prince after a gallant defence by Maréchal Boufflers. The campaign of 1709 was signalized by the battle of Malplaquet, in which Marlborough had the principal share: the victory was gained by the allies, but the French retired in good order. The capture of Mons by the Prince was the last event of the campaign. The year 1710 was not marked by any military event of moment; in 1711 the Emperor Joseph Ist. died of the small pox and was succeeded by the King of Spain, Charles II. who became the Emperor Charles VI. The English now discovered symptoms of defection from the alliance, and the Prince accordingly proceeded to England, where he obtained a small force under the com-

mand of the Duke of Ormond (Marlborough being superseded). He returned to the Low Countries and lost the battle of Denain in consequence of the too great extension of his lines. The Maréchal Villars was the general opposed to him. After this reverse, the coldness of the allies and the want of money, opposed to the great resources of the French, caused the Prince to act on the defensive and the war rather languished up to its termination by the peace of Rastadt in 1714. Louis XIV. died in 1717, and in the same year the Prince was nominated governor of the Low Countries, and war again breaking out with the Turks, he marched at the head of 125,000 men to Peterwaradin in Slavonia, where he defeated the Turks, and then besieged and took Temeswar. The campaign of 1718 was perhaps the most glorious portion of all Prince Eugene's life, as it was then that he besieged and captured Belgrade, after defeating a powerful army arrived to its relief, and that, while he himself was enfeebled and his army thinned by sickness. This achievement was quickly followed by a peace. The year 1719 and the four succeeding ones passed over in tranquillity for the Prince and the Empire; in that of 1725 Eugene signed the treaty of Cambray with Spain, on behalf of the Emperor. In 1733, a new war broke out concerning the crown of Poland, in which the Russians and Austrians were opposed to the French and Turks. The Prince assumed the command of his veterans at Heilbron, and was received by them with acclamations; he was opposed by a commander named D'Asfeld. The Prince, who deemed this war impolitic from the beginning, restrained himself to acting on the defensive, and succeeded in recommending a pacification in the year following. This was the Prince's last campaign, and the remainder of the book is only occupied with an account of his employments in peace, some remarks on politics, and an abstract of his religious creed, which, like every thing about him, appears to have been liberal, sinceræ and enlightened.

I shall only extract his few, but expressive words on hearing of the death of Louis XIV.

“ Quand j'appris la mort de Louis XIV, j'avoue que cela me fit le même effet qu'un beau vieux chêne déraciné, et couché à terre par un ouragan. Il avait été debout si long-temps! La mort, avant d'effacer les grands souvenirs, les rappelle tous au premier moment.

L'histoire a de l'indulgence dans les commencemens. Ceux du règne de ce grand roi n'en avaient pas besoin, à présent l'âge avait rogné les ongles du lion."

P. 123.

It is now understood (1832,) that these memoirs were written by the Prince de Ligne.

COCHRANE'S JOURNAL IN COLOMBIA.

March 28, 1826.

MR. C. S. COCHRANE, like Basil Hall, is a Scotchman and a captain in the British navy : to continue the parallelism, he betakes him to travel in South America and writes a book upon his observations there. Unfortunately the similitude does not hold much farther, for Captain Hall's is an admirable book, and Captain Cochrane's but an indifferent one. The tendency to the marvellous in some of his hearsay representations, creates a suspicion that he is of too credulous a disposition to be of unquestionable authenticity—an opinion strengthened by the account of his repeated disappointments from acting upon the intelligence of casual informants, respecting the richness and practicability of various mines. He is besides remarkably prejudiced against the Roman Catholic religion, and his tirades upon its doctrines and professors, placed as they are, in close collocation with the acknowledgments which the invariable attention and hospitality of the priests extort from him, subject him to the imputation of something very like ingratitude as well as illiberality.

Captain Cochrane landed at Sta. Martha in New Granada (as well as I recollect); embarked in a row boat up the river Magdalena as far as St. Juan, whence he proceeded by mules to Bogota, the capital of Colombia. Hence he continued westward, crossing the Andes and returning along their western side to Carthagena, occasionally upon rafts and sometimes upon mules. The aquatic part of his travels (the first part of them at least, or the navigation of the Magdalena river,) seems to have been of the most laborious and

distressing nature. The swarms of musquitos; the necessity of lying on shore at nights, liable to the visitations of alligators and tigers, the first of which are in constant vicinity; the insubordination of the boatmen, who being paid before-hand sometimes all abscond by common consent, leaving the traveller to shift for himself; render travelling in this manner a work of toil, uneasiness and discomfort almost beyond endurance. It is however doubtful if the journey on terra firma be upon the whole, anything better. This is effected upon mules often up to their girth in the slough of the neglected roads, or else making their perilous way over rocks and precipices: while terrific thunder storms and deluging rains assail the defenceless traveller from above, and the wretchedness of the towns and villages through which he passes give him no means of recruiting himself in their shelter. Thus it is pretty manifest that the republic of Colombia holds out few inducements for the explorations of a party of pleasure. A considerable portion of the first volume is taken up with an historical account of the inception, progress and completion of the revolution in Colombia. In this summary the author evidently had Captain Hall's beautiful sketch upon the same subject respecting Chili and Peru, in his contemplation. But he is unable to follow him *passibus æquis* and indeed gives the details in rather a confused and unintelligible manner. He is of opinion that the Catholic religion will be subverted in those countries, according to the extension of their civilization and intercourse with foreign nations; that a general deism will succeed and protestantism probably make great progress. In the two first conjectures he is probably well grounded. The disgusting mummeries with which the pure religion is there defaced will be very likely to have the effect of estranging persons sufficiently enlightened to be struck by their absurdity, and not enough so to discriminate between the essential and the adscititious, and thus to engender free-thinking. But I believe there is no historical precedent to warrant the presumption that the protestant faith, if unassisted by favour or force, will ever establish itself on the ruins of catholicity. Captain Cochrane thinks that agricultural speculations are those best calculated to make beneficial returns to the capitalist in Colombia: the astonishing fertility of the soil and the convenience of so many great navigable rivers are the grounds of this persuasion. He appears himself to have visited Colombia in some authorized capacity; I could not exactly

collect, of what kind. He mentions at the beginning of the book, his being commissioned to examine the pearl fishery on the coast and subsequently tells us of his purchasing shares in agricultural and mining speculations. There is one project which engaged much of his attention and which he seems to have left in a state of considerable forwardness : it is the draining of a lagoon near Bogota, named Guatavita, into which the aboriginal Indians used to cast immense treasures as a religious offering. It appears that considerable masses of the purest gold wrought into images and otherwise shaped, have been already drawn up from the bottom of this lake, so that the scheme, if successful, will be likely to afford nearly as much gratification to curiosity as to avarice.

Captain Cochrane's style is unaffected, and his language grammatical. But he is neither an elegant nor eloquent writer. His sentences are generally susceptible of great amendment in their structure, and in this particular he falls especially short of his prototype.

The following extract is included between inverted commas in the book, so that the author is only responsible for its language :—it is the history of the lagoon already mentioned.

“ Previously to the conquest of the country by the Spaniards, a large district, containing about a million of inhabitants, was subject to the *Cacique* of Guatavita; who there had a considerable capital, and kept up an army of thirty thousand warriors, which caused him to be much respected by the neighbouring tribes, who brought him and his people gold dust in exchange for the produce of their fields, they generally being cultivators of the soil. This Lagoon, situated between nine and ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, and formed on the summit of a conical mountain, they considered as the residence of their protecting deity, to whom, from a religious motive, they thought it necessary to make offerings twice a year. In consequence of this, all the *Cacique's* subjects assembled at stated times, with their gold offerings, and, forming in grand procession, advanced with music to the Lagoon, winding up the mountain by a well designed broad road, conducting to the summit, a few feet below which were then washed by the water of the lake. Arrived there, the *Cacique* and the principal chiefs embarked in large canoes, by steps formed in that break, (pointing to

a rent in the top of the mountain which the eye could just make out) The people at the same time distributed themselves all around the Lagoon. On arriving at the centre, the chiefs anointed the Cacique, and powdered him over with a profusion of gold dust, from which practice, in various parts of South America, has arisen the name of El Dorado.

“On a signal given, the multitude turned their backs on the Lagoon; and at the moment when the Cacique plunged into its bosom, they shouted, and threw in over their shoulders, as far as they could, their offerings. This done, the Cacique landed, and returned to his capital in the same manner as he came, considering that the sins of himself and people, committed during the last six months, were expiated. According to a calculation, made from a basis laid down by Monsieur de la Kier, of the Royal Institute of Paris, who particularly examined every document relating to the Lagoon, there ought to be gold and precious stones yet buried in it to the amount of one billion one hundred and twenty millions sterling. On the Spaniards conquering the country, they so cruelly persecuted the natives to obtain gold, that most of them threw what they had left into the Lagoon. The Cacique himself caused to be cast into the centre of it the burdens of fifty men, laden with gold dust.”

V. 2. Ps. 200-1-2-3.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE

LIFE OF GILBERT EARLE.

March 29, 1826.

THE supposed Mr. Earle has communicated rather a record of sentiments than a relation of events; and the small contingent of the latter is so unconnected and so immethodically put together, that it is not very easy to arrange it into a consecutive story. But a narrative of facts was not the author's object and he is therefore irresponsible for all the imperfections of his work on this score. What he had in his contemplation he has

executed with superior ability. Gilbert Earle is represented as a man blasted with the acutest sensibility—that pernicious luxury with which its possessor would so rarely part, even while bleeding at every artery from its wounds : with much powers of observation and a mechanism within his own bosom so well adapted to the performance of experiments in that science, he evinces superior skill in tracing and developing the operations of the human heart. Having early in life formed a criminal attachment, the consequences of which embittered all his after days, it appears that thenceforward “melancholy marked him for her own.” The subsequent loss of a most excellent mother and an equally admirable brother served still more to deepen the tinge of his character, and confirmed in him the habit of viewing all objects through the most sombre medium. It is truly said in the introduction, that where an autobiographer discloses his own emotions in such a manner as to present an abstraction—a mirror in which every reader will discern fewer or more traces of self resemblance; such a one is never reproached with egotism : on the contrary, we gladly hear the professor discussing a science in which he is well skilled. The succeeding pages establish the truth and justify the relevancy of this remark. With the exception of a short and most interesting extract from his deceased brother's diary, they are all devoted to an analysis of the author's own feelings, and yet there is nothing in the reiteration of the first personal pronoun that jars upon the ear : one is not ever inclined (at least I was not,) to complain of the paucity of incident and if the characters of his beloved, his mother and brother, were a little less elaborately amplified, and in a style of a little less indiscriminate eulogy, the book would be equally free from all imputation of tediousness or monotony. The visit to the school of his early days is the masterpiece of the whole; it is feeling, picturesque and even humorous—but gravely so. I need scarcely state more summarily that I was greatly pleased with this memoir, which I read by accident, and I should gladly become better acquainted with its author through some others of his writings.

I select from those melancholy musings a very short extract : it contains almost a truism, but one oftener felt than reflected upon or expressed.

“The effect of outward objects upon our thoughts, feelings, and recollections, is too intimately known to every man, for it to be necessary for me to comment upon its strength and truth. I say ‘truth,’—for one flash of this kind, whether produced by the agency of sight, sound, or *smell*, is more sudden, forcible, and effectual, in bringing back the memory of the mind to the almost present existence of long past-days,—than all the thought or reflection in the world.”

P. 190.

DR. DOYLE'S ESSAY

ON THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

March 31, 1826.

THE Catholic question is debatable upon two grounds—political and controversial : the present work is confined to the discussion of the latter. To judge of its merits under this chief consideration, it is necessary to be possessed of a very extensive range of theological acquirements, and as I can boast of but very little indeed, I shall venture no further on the subject than to say, that if the authorities are fairly cited—neither garbled nor strained, and no others of a conflicting tendency suppressed, then must Dr. Doyle be completely triumphant, for his inferences are strictly legitimate ; therefore the only question must be as to the premises whence they flow : only assume these data to be correctly stated, and the Catholic religion both as to matters of faith and doctrine is most successfully defended against all its assailants.

As a literary composition this work is however open to the criticisms of all classes of readers, and I think all will agree that in this particular its merits are of a very high order : the unassuming dignity of its general tone and bearing ; the temperate exposure of those prejudices which influence the honest opposers of emancipation ; the bursts of eloquent indignation against others who from ignorance and corruption minister to the perpetuation of these prejudices ; are all admirably befitting the champion of a great cause—

a cause defrauded of its just triumph by ignorant prejudice or interested malignity: by the machinations of those in whom from their education as gentlemen and their station as lawgivers, ignorance is shameful, and concession to the sway of interest, especially criminal.

The style is always perspicuous and the language select: sometimes in the argumentative parts there is a sort of restraint perceptible—a seeming caution in the phraseology as if from a consciousness that any indiscretion might be fatal. But when it becomes necessary to expose ignorance or repel falsehood, then there gushes an outpouring of impassioned eloquence, illustrated occasionally with some beautiful similes from the inspired writings, which gives to such passages an uncommon glow and animation, and is the more striking from being so strongly contrasted with the unadorned plainness in which all the purely argumentative passages are conveyed.

This book has unaccountably disappeared from the Dublin Institution, where only I had access to it: so that I am obliged to close this article without making any extract.

ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG RIFLEMAN.

April 1, 1826.

THIS is strictly what it professes to be: the adventures of a youth, a German by birth, who was induced to join the French armies on his native village falling into their hands after the battle of Jena. He was immediately marched into Spain, and fought, and pillaged, and starved, under the standard of his country's enemies, until he was captured by the English near Almeida. Being sent along with other prisoners to Lisbon, he underwent a most cruel confinement, from which he obtained his liberation on accepting an offer to enlist in the British service: a temptation which it would have required a very different standard of principle from any that the young Saxon had the smallest idea of, to have refused. He was then sent into England and learned discipline for some time in the

Isle of Wight : thence he was shipped off to Gibraltar, next to Palermo, and so remained in Sicily until the defeat of Murat, when he returned to England, obtained his discharge and was sent home to his native country—his book terminating with this event.

The young soldier tells his story agreeably enough : he brought into life with him a stock of good health, good spirits and good humour, which communicate their enlivening effects to his narrative and support him against a series of hardships such as none of our general notions of campaigning in a hostile country, could afford the smallest conception of. Yet excessive as those sufferings are represented to have been, one does not once suspect exaggeration : there is an absence of all seeming effort to surprise, or create effect, more calculated to enforce conviction than the most solemn asseveration. The first reflection excited by this relation is on the detestable system upon which Bonaparte achieved his conquests : sending out immense armies unprovided with every necessary, and avowedly destined to subsist themselves by plunder ; thus aiming a deadly blow at the welfare of so many myriads both in this life and the next. The second reflection is one of gratitude to Providence for having protected our country from the scourge of invasion, and to this is added another pleasurable sensation nearly allied to gratitude, from having our attention thus directed to the numerous comforts which surround almost the poorest of us, and are unobserved from constant fruition ; compared with the privations of such multitudes of fellow beings torn from their homes by the heartless ambition of one man, and let loose like wild beasts, to which every thing was done to assimilate them, upon an unoffending and unresisting people. The writer's enlistment into the English service gave him ample opportunity of comparing the situation of the British soldier with that of the French one. The superiority of the former in equipments of every kind conducive to his respectability and comfort, is most strikingly exemplified, and redounds infinitely to the credit of those to whom the regulation of such matters is confided in this country.

I have already said that this book was remarkable for verisimilitude. There is no very great merit in the style, and the incidents detailed being confined to those immediately under the inspection of the writer, (who never attained to a higher rank than that of cor-

poral,) possess no great interest in themselves. I extract one as striking as any I could find.

"I will in this place give an account of the death of one of my comrades, owing to the remarkable circumstance attending it. He was a native of Brunswick, named Langkopf, and had acquired a considerable booty in Galicia, about one thousand six hundred dollars. He had with this money been leading a true soldier's life, until the siege of Rodrigo; here he was obliged to part with his gold watch, the last article of value he possessed. He had often treated me, without my being able to make him any return, owing to fortune not having been so favourable to me. Just, however, on the evening of his death, as we were being dismissed, he asked me for some tobacco, which I willingly gave him, as I had at that time a store of some pounds. We were just then at the entrance of the battery, and he said to me: 'Comrade, my money is all gone; I must now either earn the cross of honour, procure more money, or die.' He had scarcely uttered the last word when a four pounder came, shattered his head into a thousand pieces, and laid me senseless on the ground. It was a long while before I recovered, when I found myself in the hands of my comrades, who were sprinkling me with water. Langkopf, in the mean time, had been thrown over the breast-work, and thus his wish was fulfilled at the very moment he expressed it."

P. 208-9.

FIRESIDE SCENES.

April 5, 1826.

THIS is a series of detached stories, all belonging to that now multitudinous family, the religious fictions, and each marked with the attributes that pertain to the entire caste. First, a rigid sectarian exclusiveness, admitting within the pale of its orthodoxy, only those who, fulfilling to the letter the injunction to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, utterly renounce all that the

world calls pleasure. Secondly, a habit of referring every occurrence not merely to the permission of Providence, which is right, but to his active and direct intervention, which I presume to think wrong. Such are some of the generic marks of the Evangelical novels. If we accustom ourselves to expect visible evidences of God's judgments while we are in this life; if we look for what is termed poetical justice, and to see the guilty conspicuously punished, and the righteous as conspicuously rewarded here below; surely such expectations must have a tendency to withdraw our regards from that scene of final adjustment when the whole economy of divine government is to be made manifest to us; and to weaken our faith and our hope in proportion to the number of instances, and they form an overwhelming majority in human affairs, wherein we are disappointed of witnessing dispensations of complete justice. For these reasons, as well as for the illiberality towards other Christian sects so universally pervading this description of works, I rather doubt their beneficial tendency. If charity be an indispensable Christian virtue, their morality is certainly faulty as far as it is concerned.

The style and language of the religious novels is not less individualized. In almost every sentence a quotation from the bible is introduced; and where it is not, the sentence is not the less obviously constructed on the model of the scriptural language. When the subject is adequate to it, this has an impressive and a fine effect; but where the idea is trifling or commonplace, to involve it in the florid orientalism of the sacred writings savours much of cant, and excites ideas rather of the ludicrous than the solemn character.

I do not go the length of saying that religious reflections cannot properly or advantageously find a place in a novel, or a work addressed chiefly to the entertainment of the reader—on the contrary I think it highly commendable in the novelist to exhibit those characters for whom he claims our esteem and sympathy, as under religious influence, and to ascribe to its absence the crimes and miseries of the vicious; but I do think that theology should not be too much familiarized nor made the prominent topic of such compositions. There are places and seasons for all things, and whatever we desire to hold in veneration we ought carefully to preserve from association with what is vulgar or trivial. Manse Headrigg in her compulsory

ride says, "By the blessing of God I have leapt a ditch." *—This is a fair specimen of the taste of such writings and only more ludicrous than much of what they contain, by the contrast of a comic situation.

Hitherto I have been speaking of my author only in his collective capacity. He is evidently a man of strong and cultivated mind, and writes, when he does use his own resources, in a style of great force and beauty. I select two specimens.

"Far different from the people of Athens, the British nation distrusts every thing which delights their ears, and strip the argument offered to them, of every ornament:—they try it by the stern test of reason; and they will rarely, if ever, suffer their understandings to be bribed by delicacies offered to their imaginations. That argumentative and didactic style which was so distasteful to the lively genius of the Athenians, is precisely what a British audience requires from all who aspire to eminence in public speaking. It is true, that the ornaments of style and the graces of manner, are not rejected as auxiliaries, but they must be carefully kept in the background,—never thrust forward, but shown carelessly through natural openings. Nay, it is remarkable, that generally the most popular orators in the British senate, forum and church, have been entirely devoid of the embellishments of a captivating manner. Of all qualifications the absence of this last is the least regretted by the English. In many instances the want of it has been a positive advantage. The flowing smoothness and amplification of Ciceronic periods, has sunk beneath the power of that rugged energy of style, which seems the out-pouring of the real sentiments; and which, as being, in the popular opinion, almost always identified with sincerity, cannot fail of obtaining the decided applause of a people, who dread nothing so much as to be the dupes of mere sound, and of the coxcomberly of eloquence." *Vol. 1. P. 91-2-3.*

"It is well for us that we cannot withdraw the veil that envelops the future. The spirit would sink beneath the prospective evils of the happiest life, if they were displayed to each view in regular succession, without those breathing spaces between, in

* Tales of my Landlord—"Old Mortality."

which the powers of the mind and the frame are recruited and new strung to combat with the strife of existence. Hope must necessarily cease to exist under such an economy, and that is the real happiness of man."

Vol. 2. P. 80.

MEMOIRS

OF THE MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH.

April 19, 1826.

I WAS greatly disappointed with these memoirs, which I ascribe partly to my having seen the most amusing portions of them extracted into the newspapers before the work itself came into my hands, but chiefly from my acquaintance with the pillaged authorities enabling me so fully to detect the gross plagiaries with which the entire abounds. Poor Wraxall has suffered the most severely in his plumage by this spoliation. The account of Marshal Saxe, of the Princesses of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, of Lord North and divers other persons and transactions, are all taken from him without any acknowledgment, and only altered, as the gypsies disguise stolen children, by external disfigurement. It is indeed extraordinary that a woman carefully educated, always surrounded by literary society and herself no slight pretender to literary eminence, should exhibit so signal a failure in point of style as this book is chargeable with. The sentences are constructed not only with harshness and inelegance, but often perplexed into absolute enigmas.

Another besetting fault of these memoirs is a want of relevancy and connexion in the parts. Nothing should find entrance into an autobiography except what the writer either actually witnessed, what had some close relation to him, or some remarkable effect in moulding his fortunes or character. But here it is quite otherwise. Anecdotes are told à propos to nothing, and persons described who had no other connexion with the author than being occasionally on the visiting list of Brandenburgh House. This irrelevancy increases so much from the commencement of the second volume for-

wards, that the latter half of the book almost wholly ceases to give us any account whatever of her Serene Highness's *whereabouts*, and forfeits its claim to the character of memoirs altogether.

I think it likely, from the great haste perceptible in the entire composition, the adulatory terms in which the King and Duke of York are mentioned, and the complaints of the arrears of the Prussian pension, that this publication is an expedient to raise supplies. If so, it would better have answered its purpose, as far as the public is concerned, had it let us a little more into the writer's own secrets, or at least told more of what was now to be learned for the first time.

I make an extract in observance of a general rule, for there is nothing that deserves transcription throughout the whole of those (nearly a thousand) large pages. The short specimen I append will not present a very favourable view of her Highness's precision of ideas.

“When the Emperor Charles V. had satiated his ambition, he retired into solitude : it has been said by some writer, that he who retires into solitude must be either a beast or an angel : the censure is too severe, and the praise unmerited. The discontented being who retires from society, is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life without experience,* and has not known how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind; spleen takes possession of him; not distinguishing in his resentments, he regards the world with detestation, and, commencing man-hater, seeks solitude to be at liberty to rail.”

Vol. 2. P. 256-7.

WOODSTOCK.

May 16, 1826.

I HAVE before recorded in these pages my opinion that historical personages do not make suitable heroes of novels or romances : the

* Who does not?

power of our imagination is lost in the stubbornness of conviction : we might as easily believe that one of our own family, or the intimate of our entire lives had gone through a series of adventures different from all we ever knew to befall them, as persuade ourselves that Charles II. passed a masquerading month or two with an old cavalier at Woodstock—had been within an hour of being captured there by his inveterate enemy, and finally delivered only by a second disguise assumed by the son of his host. Nay even admitting that we were less acquainted with all the particular adventures of this erratic monarch's life, their final conclusion must be too notorious to allow much anxiety as to the means by which it was effected. The defect arising from this source is not so remarkable in this story as in its immediate predecessor, the second story in the *Tales of the Crusaders*, of which I now forget the name*. It is true that Charles is as much the hero of "Woodstock" as Richard is of the other, but yet there are some other persons in whose fate we feel interested among the characters, and of the termination of whose history we are not previously informed. Nevertheless this historical foreknowledge almost wholly mars the effect of perhaps the only very high-wrought scene in the present tale—I mean the storming of the bower of Woodstock. As the "effect defective comes by cause," some pains have been taken in the reviews of this story, to account for the sudden exhaustion of a stream till lately so abundant, which it evidences. One says Sir Walter Scott's power does not lie in descriptions of purely natural character, but of character modified by times and circumstances, and to the due delineation of which all accessories, even that of costume and dialect, are necessary. This I think is unmeaning criticism—we do not know what sort of thing human character is in its pure abstraction, and can no more conceive it divested of those adjuncts, than we can conceive the idea of colour divested of extension. The art of the great analyzer of human nature is therefore, not to exhibit it in its nearest possible approach to that abstraction, but to show its universal elemental qualities coexistent with all superadded ones. In the same manner as one would convey the idea of the colours red and blue to a person who had never seen either, by pointing them out in the

* The "Talisman."

skies, in a landscape, a flower and all other substances in which they were to be found.

From whatever cause it may proceed, whether from haste, indolence, or exhaustion of materials, the fact is unhappily too certain that Sir Walter Scott is on the wane, and that, not as compared with the classics of his pen, but even with reference to those productions which have been universally allowed to be inferior to them. Woodstock has neither the picturesque landscape, the marked characters, nor the dramatic incidents which occasionally relieved the inferiority of the Abbot, Redgauntlet, and the Pirate; and it can never be even named with Waverley, Guy Mannering, or Old Mortality.

The following, though rather juvenile, is imaginative and neatly expressed.

“ There is, I know not why, something peculiarly pleasing to the imagination, in contemplating the Queen of Night, when she is *wading*, as the expression is, among the vapours which she has not power to dispel, and which on their side are unable entirely to quench her lustre. It is the striking image of patient virtue, calmly pursuing her path through good report and bad report, having that excellence in herself which ought to command all admiration, but bedimmed in the eyes of the world, by suffering, by misfortune, by calumny.”

V. 2. P. 182.

ACCOUNT OF THE TONGA ISLANDS.

May, 1826.

THE materials for this narrative were furnished by a Mr. Mariner, who visited the Pacific Ocean some twelve or fifteen years ago. The ship in which he sailed having anchored at one of the Tonga Islands (by Captain Cook called the Friendly Islands, but by a misnomer, for the inhabitants intended to murder him), the natives were imprudently admitted on board in such numbers as to enable them to seize the vessel and massacre the crew, which they completely

effected, with the exception of four or five persons. Among the number of the saved was Mr. Mariner, who after some hair-breadth escapes, succeeded in attaching himself to the king of the Islands, by whom he was adopted and protected to the period of his (the king's) death. Mr. Mariner's account is not very flattering either to the civilization or morals of those islanders. They have no idea of written language, so that when they saw the words whispered by them to Mr. Mariner written down by him and heard them spoken by another European, they considered it the effect of magic. They are equally destitute of all arts and manufactures, but nevertheless evince a surprising dexterity in the use of their clumsy substitutes, so as even successfully to amputate a limb by means of a shell. The horrible practice of cannibalism exists among them, although the persons addicted to it are held in disesteem; not however from the more obvious causes, but from its being considered a proof of effeminacy—I suppose as epicurism is with us. Their religious doctrines are wild and absurd and, like all idolatrous forms of worship, exert no influence on their social conduct, except in war:— Their idea being that rewards and punishments are awarded to them in a future state according as they have evinced bravery or cowardice towards their enemies in this. Like almost all savages they are vindictive and cruel when injured. The King, to whose protection Mr. Mariner owed his preservation, although disfigured by the vices of his situation, is described as being possessed of many eminent qualities: uncommon and intelligent curiosity upon subjects of science; a great power of generalizing his ideas, and a prompt and ready eloquence, of a kind calculated to influence even civilized auditors, marked him out for the man to have extended the advantages of education, had he possessed them, in comprehensive and practical results.

The matter of this work is not such as to render it highly interesting—The general features of savage existence are now too well known and the minute distinctions too little deserving of specification, to repay a reader for the trouble of going through two large volumes descriptive of one of the very lowest classes of mankind in intellectual attainments.

Of the style and language not much need be said: Mr. Mariner must be either very modest, or his compiler very much the contrary, to have placed such an intervenient as the latter between the ad-

venturer himself and the public. The book is chiefly a journal of facts, interspersed with some descriptions of ceremonials either festive or religious, which descriptions were, to me at least, generally very unintelligible.

I could not catch at any passage suited to or deserving of extraction.

THE BOYNE WATER.

June, 1826.

I HAVE often asked myself why it is that those fictitious relations which violently outrage good taste, frequently possess something of an energy and vivacity that enchain our imagination, while the judgment is making constant but ineffectual efforts to disengage us from the thralldom? May not the reason be something similar to that given for the eloquence of insanity: a solution founded on the general incompatibility of great boldness with perfect correctness, and consequently assuming that in proportion as we sacrifice the one, we improve in the other? In fictitious writings the extreme of vivacity, although it generally approaches the caricature, is always to be preferred to the smooth unenlivening current of mere correctness. A crack-brained fellow, so he be not mischievous, is sometimes a very diverting companion, and always immeasurably preferable to a solemn proser. We feel interested in contemplating the workings of a mind that is unreservedly turned inside out for our amusement, even although the disclosure presents many deformities which good taste would wish to have been kept concealed. It is perhaps for some such reasons as these that the extravagant has obtained so much toleration in our fictions, and that the Boyne Water, although replete with all kinds of faults, both of outline and colouring, from possessing a kind of reckless energy—a grasping at effect, through all hazards,—takes a hold upon the reader's mind, which is not relaxed until the tale be finished.

Like the generality of Sir Walter Scott's novels, (on which it is

obviously framed,) this is a fictitious graft upon an historical stock ; and affords a very striking illustration (I think) of the faults into which such construction inevitably leads. If the historical part assumes most prominence, then the historical agents must be the principal characters, and if their actions be faithfully recorded, we might as well resort at once to the fountain head of information, in some of the memoirs of the time : or, on the other hand, if the authentic personages be endued with imaginary qualities or actions, then we are at once recalled to a conviction of the falsity of the whole, and so all interest is at an end. If however the historical events and characters are made so far subordinate as only to mark the chronology of the work, and to give cause and probability for the vicissitudes undergone by the imaginary characters, then the awkward dilemma above-mentioned is avoided. The incidents of the novel thus become supplementary to our historical reading, and infix it more strongly in our memory : in the former case they are inconsistent with our recollections of accredited history and either confuse them or are at once corrected by them. The author of the Boyne Water has taken the objectionable course. His principal characters are all historical and prominently so. The great events of the epoch of the story are not made instrumental in fixing the destination of the imaginary characters, but these perform in a kind of clumsy underplot conducing to these very events. I do not know whether what I have thus hastily written would be intelligible to any other person, or will continue to be so to myself at a future day, but certain I am that novels constructed on the plan of the one under review cannot long maintain their popularity.

I have not the book by me for an extract. I should not however close this article without remarking on the servile plagiarism evinced in all the fictitious personages : Oonagh is Meg Merrilies with a brogue ; Walker, a diluted Balfour of Burleigh ; O'Hallagan (the priest, I think, is so called) a Romanized Macbriar, and *sic de cæteris*. The scene of the attack on the rapparees at Evelyn's house also, though decidedly the best thing in the book, is not much altered from that of the covenanters in Old Mortality after the battle of Bothwell Brigg.

GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE.

June 24, 1826.

A ROMANCE, prefaced by a memoir of the author, the once celebrated Mrs. Radcliffe, in which are introduced copious extracts from journals that she was in the habit of writing while engaged in excursions through different parts of England. These extracts bespeak a constant effort at the picturesque; and particularly at the production of the impressions which are excited by the more palpable agency of lights and shadows. After all her pains, Mrs. Radcliffe produces no clear or definite ideas of any landscape: indeed from the penury of language, and the impossibility of any two imaginations forming the same picture out of the same verbal materials, this must always be the case. The reader of descriptive narrative must be himself the poet—must himself combine and dispose the parts, while the author must be satisfied with supplying the raw material, or at best confining his attempts to the establishment of one prominent landmark or point of view in the entire scene. Of the utter vagueness of this sort of writing Mrs. Radcliffe herself supplies a most striking instance. Her descriptions of the passages of the Alps and Apennines and of the general characteristics of Italian landscape, were supposed to have been most accurate, and the result of frequent observation, whereas Mrs. Radcliffe never saw either of those chains of mountains and never visited any part of Italy!

The editor's own task in the prefatory part seems to have been mainly directed to refute a generally received opinion, that Mrs. Radcliffe before her corporeal death had fallen a victim to the terrors she herself had conjured up and was long suffering under a total aberration of mind. The account given of her disposition, habits and tastes seems effectually to negative such an idea. If the editor be credible, Mrs. Radcliffe was a domestic, rational woman; fond of retirement and averse from all kinds of display—deriving her chief amusement from the periodical recurrence of those excursions

of which she has taken so much pains to perpetuate the impressions. Had the editor rested here he would have done wiser than in seeking to confirm his assertions respecting the preservation of Mrs. R's intellects by bringing to light one of the heaviest, worst-compacted and unsatisfactory works of imagination which it has ever fallen to my lot to meet with. We have a murder and robbery without any motive assigned—imprisonments and sentences of death without proof of guilt:—liberations, pardons and patronage bestowed upon the evidence and at the behest of two ghosts; and a style in which all the stiff quaintness of the early writers is preserved, without any of their freshness and originality—add to this, great pretensions to antiquarian lore in the most prolix descriptions of festivals, turneys and pageants. Such is Gaston de Blondville; which I mean thus summarily to despatch, because unqualified condemnation should be concise. I shall accordingly only add that if Mrs. Radcliffe's posthumous editor disproves the opinion of her having been insane, he rather corroborates the more comprehensive one of her having lost her intellects.

The following account of an apparition is a tolerable average of the composition.

“ The features of the knight were entire, though shrunk and changed in death. They were of a noble cast, and bore the very countenance of the apparition. On the forehead appeared the death wound. While yet they looked, the appearance of the knight began to change, and the countenance to shrink and fade away. Some said this was only an effect of the living air upon mortal features so long shut up in death; others said not so, but that it was, like all the rest, to bring truth to light and administer justice to an innocent man. Then the coffin lid was replaced, and that awful spectacle of mortality was hidden from view, for all time. During this, still music was heard in the air, like unto a requiem, hymning some blessed spirit.”

Vol. 5. P. 29, 30.

MATILDA.

July 3, 1826.

THIS is a pleasant summer refreshment—not compounded of any unknown or even uncommon ingredients, but light, effervescent and palatable. The scenes of fashionable life are exhibited with a power that evidently penetrates beneath the dazzling surface, to detect the essential constituents; and produces the materials most capable of being wrought into lively comic representation, with great skill and knowledge of stage effect.

The story is nothing—altogether trite. An amiable young lady disappointed in her first and only attachment—induced by the machinations of an interested guardian to bestow her hand upon a man every way unsuited to her: subsequently brought into constant contact with the object of her affections, by a succession of casualties familiar to all novel readers—An elopement and the heroine's death of a broken heart, wind up the story.

The great merit of *Matilda* is the light, engaging style in which it is written and the brilliancy with which the relation of commonplace events is heightened. There is a good deal of political dissertation introduced, which though irreproachable in itself, being of that liberal and enlarged character to be expected from the reputed author, is yet of questionable merit in point of relevancy and is not, I think, well dovetailed with the lighter materials. The poignant animadversions upon English reserve and formality are more apposite and better executed. Of the personifications, I think that of fashionable dandyism is the happiest. The vulgar city party are, I presume, overcharged. Perhaps from a desire of producing a strong contrast, or more likely still, from the author's aristocratic habits precluding him from ever having had a sitting from the life: certain it is that the Hobson party with their foreign slip-slop strongly resemble the caricatures of the John Bull newspaper.

The following sketch of the feelings of two men of fashion arriving at a dinner party before time, is very pleasant.

“ Stopping at the door at this moment, the length of time that elapsed before the thundering announcement of their arrival produced its (usually instantaneous) effect, seemed to confirm their apprehensions as to the flagrant punctuality of their arrival; and the tardy appearance of one liveried lackey alone, in red waistcoat and white apron, verified their worst fears. Many a felon has mounted the fatal ladder with less appearance of shame and contrition, than was painted in the countenances of these unhappy ‘young men about town,’ as they ascended the carpeted stairs, about to expiate the offence of such unnatural prematurity of arrival; and the deserts of Arabia would hardly have appeared more awful in their eyes, than did the solitude of the drawing-room, where they found themselves—literally first. Silence succeeded the shutting of the door, which was at last broken by Lord George; whilst, by the help of the pier glass, with his right hand, he arranged his flattened locks; and, with his left, quelled the first symptoms of insurrection in his neckcloth.”

Vol. 1. P. 4, 5.

PATIENCE.

July 5, 1826.

THIS tale caused me an agreeable surprise and I owe some gratitude to Mrs. Hofland for exciting the sensation. I took it up to supply the vacuity of an idle hour, expecting to find something trite and trashy, leading by a labyrinth of which every one possessed the clue, to a termination such as every one foresaw in the second page. But on the contrary, my attention was at once rivetted and sustained without a single collapse to the end of a sensible, well-written tale, abounding in passages of highly pathetic power. The story turns upon the sufferings of an amiable, religious female from the conduct of a husband whose temper and habits are of a totally opposite nature to her's. The effects of a youth of profligacy and selfishness in producing premature debility and death, and in exacerbating the temper, are detailed with great fidelity. Mrs. Hofland reminds one of Mrs. Opie. She has a great deal of that

gentle pathos and religious sentiment devoid of cant, which distinguish Mrs. Opie's tales.

I select a short specimen.

“ ‘ Yes, Dora, I *do* love you,’ said Stancliffe, after a long pause; ‘ and if it please God to give me strength, I will prove that I know your value, we will shew them all what we can do, my love.’ ”

“ There was an earnest tenderness in these words, which went beyond their simple meaning in the expression conveyed; and although Dora durst not place the reliance on them natural to a heart so confiding as hers, (for disappointment so severe and reiterated as she had experienced, must damp the most sanguine, and chill the most loving heart,) yet still something was evidently gained—the humbling of a proud spirit is a great and difficult step; it is the first breaking of that rock from which the tears of true repentance may flow, to fertilize a barren soil.”

P. 264.

VIVIAN GREY.

July 8, 1826.

I WAS disappointed with this novel, not only on the ground of its deficiency in point of literary merit in general, but from its transgressing in a manner so little apparently consistent with its being the production of any practised writer; much less of men of eminence like Croker, Gifford or Lockhart; to whom respectively, rumour had ascribed it. To express a criticism upon Vivian Grey in one word, it is altogether *juvenile*—full of the evidences of unsoubered imagination and immature judgment: straining at effect by every species of gaudy colouring and violent contrast, and exhibiting no single trait of the practised writer; of the cautious and prudent minister to public taste, who will rather forego the chances of striking and surprising altogether, than purchase them by the desperate agency of rant and extravagance. In Vivian Grey, probability is alike outraged in the characters and the incidents of which

they are the promoters. No man so doltish and gullable as the Marquess of Carabas could ever have obtained a lead for a single hour in British councils. No youth ever impelled by the goads of ambition—itsself a vice not inherently allied to the mean and ignoble passions,—ever commenced his career like Vivian Grey—an accomplished liar and hypocrite *ab ovo*. Ambition disappointed of achieving its purposes by legitimate means may resort to derogatory ones after the others have failed; certainly never without giving them a trial, or at the starting post of life and after the rudiments at least of a virtuous character have been laid. Mrs. Felix Loraine is also an enormous moral distortion. In the published fragment (for the book evidently does not terminate with the second volume) her designs are not explained; but her means are unnatural in themselves and palpably unsuited to any ends. The author has plagiarised his best drawn character, Cleveland, from, it is hard to say, whom—so many originals exist of a copy, which is only a tolerable drawing, because it *is* a copy.

The existing literary boulimia must be fed into satiety and nausea before its cure is accomplished, and the effect of ministering to it with such aliment as this will be to bring about that happy consummation speedily. Meantime, let the author of Vivian Grey be quick with his third volume, and then continue to rhapsodize while he may. “Make hay while the sun shines,” says the proverb, and never in his greatest tropical fervour did that luminary generate and quicken more noxious vegetation than the indiscriminating beams of public encouragement now foster in the rank soil of British literature.

I shall give an extract when the publication of the third volume will afford me an opportunity of returning to the subject.

HALL'S VOYAGE TO THE LOO CHOO.

July 13, 1826.

IF somewhat of disappointment is felt on closing this volume, the fault is not the author's : he has made the best use of his scanty materials and the disappointment arises hence, that they *were* so scanty. Of the two countries noticed in this narrative, the first is Corea, on the shore of which the English were scarcely permitted to set foot, and obstinately prohibited from advancing to the interior. The parties being quite unintelligible to each other by means of language, the English, with every disposition to conciliate the natives, were obliged to give up the affair as hopeless. They accordingly soon departed after receiving a visit on shipboard from a sort of chief or governor, a petulant despotic old gentleman, of whose appearance and conduct a very laughable account is given.

From Corea, Captains Hall and Maxwell sailed in their respective ships to the Loo Choo, a large island near the Eastern Chinese coast. Here they were received with the same demonstrations of aversion and distrust as before. The natives, although they freely indulged their own curiosity in crowding the ships and prying into every thing, seemed to have no idea that any similar sentiment should be entertained by their visitors respecting themselves; and notwithstanding that a conversational communication was kept up through the medium of a Chinese interpreter, and every manifestation of good will made to them by the officers and sailors, they for a long time persisted in refusing permission to any person even to land; and to the last never allowed the English to enter their villages, see their women, or, above all, gain any knowledge respecting their king. This suspicion, surviving as it did the most unremitting exertion of kindly offices, rather detracts from the favourable impression which Captain Hall is desirous to convey of this people's character. It is indeed a curious and anomalous fact that a simple inoffensive race, like the Loo Choo islanders; seemingly ignorant of the use of

arms, without ever knowing war and scarcely acquainted with the practice of corporal punishments, should have maintained a distrustful reserve upon so many subjects, that was proof against all caresses and co-existent with the greatest apparent affection for their visitors.

Under such circumstances Captain Hall's materials were necessarily very limited. These however he has turned to the best account and out of them has formed a pleasant, instructive book, marked with much of that ease and polish of style for which he has since become so distinguished; and marked also with much of what distinguishes him still more honourably—an amiable, liberal, and investigating turn of mind.

As the treatment of children forms one of the most approved tests of the state of national civilization and morals, I extract some information upon that subject.

“The chiefs were generally accompanied by one or two of their sons, who took their places near them, and were always put forward when there was anything curious to be seen. In this way they were encouraged to make themselves acquainted with every thing, and yet nothing could be more respectful or affectionate than they always were. Great pains were taken to form the manners of the children, and we never observed an instance of rudeness in any one of them, though they were as full of life and spirits as the wildest English schoolboys. John the Chinaman afforded them much amusement: he was a great coxcomb and therefore fair game for the boys; they used to surround him and pretend to pull his long tail; but they never actually pulled it, but merely teased him a little, and then ran away. These little traits seem worthy of notice, as they belong to a style of education quite different from what we had seen in China and some other eastern countries, where the children are made to look like men in miniature.”

P. 212.

BRAMBLETYE HOUSE.

July 29, 1826.

THE surviving partner in that celebrated firm to which we owe the manufacture of the admirable "Rejected Addresses," seems to have retained ample capital, after the dissolution of the joint concern, for the production of excellent Birmingham articles. I mean to employ this epithet only in its restricted sense, implying imitation merely, and by no means in the comprehensive one inclusive of baseness and alloy in the materials. With the impression of this very meritorious novel fresh on the mind, it would be indeed ungrateful as well as unjust to employ any invidious term towards its author. In Brambletye House Mr. Smyth has evinced mimetic powers of a still higher character than he laid claim to in his poetic work. That was a burlesque; a delightful one to be sure, and containing so perfect a resemblance along with the caricatures, as to be not only most amusing, but highly instructive too; enabling us to detect blemishes which might well escape notice in the originals, either from being more latent in themselves or overshadowed by contiguous beauties: the whole was farcical and irresistibly ludicrous. In Brambletye House there is nothing of this: it is a downright, palpable fac-simile of the style, sentiment and machinery of Sir Walter Scott's novels, without an attempt at ridicule from beginning to end: it presents an extraordinary, perhaps an unique example of an overt plagiarism possessing great attractions of itself, and scarcely less calculated to entertain a reader to whom it was the first work upon the same model, than to please the student and admirer of Scott. As it is pretty certain that all claim to originality of thinking is resolvable into the merit of novelty in the selection and combination of materials *not* original, it is passing strange that a writer of taste and information like Mr. Smyth, should content himself with being a servile copyist—nay, that with all his might, he should be able to effect it; and after all his practice as a writer, to divest himself so completely as

he does of every peculiarity of style, and to endue himself so completely with all the attributes of his model. For I will venture to say that had the talismanic words, "by the author of *Waverley*," followed the announcement of the title in the title-page, not one in fifty thousand would have detected the imposture. It is true nevertheless that while we fell into the trap, we should again reiterate the now oft-repeated remark that Scott was waning, but we must have allowed that if inferior on the whole, it was in some respects an improvement upon his wont; for Mr. Smyth, like all clever imitators, steers clear of many of the faults of his archetype. *Brambletye House* has more unity in the plot, more evenness in the style, more coherence in the incidents, and more skilful development in the winding up, than most of Scott's later novels: although we cannot for a moment forget the scissars and the pasting brush, we are never reminded of them by clumsy or inartificial joinings. On the other hand, we find none of those flashes of vivid description by which a whole landscape, with its mountains, its woods, its rivers, its sunbeams and shadows is made at once to burst upon our sight; none of that delicate management of the virtues and foibles of human character by means of which so deep pathos and so exquisite humour are alternately evolved—in short none of the witching touches of a master artist. To this observation the character of the Burgomaster and the description of his establishment approach the nearest of any thing in the book to an exception; but even he, although we know of no exact counterpart in Scott, has a family resemblance which renders his features and manners familiar to us.

Brambletye House at once establishes its author's claim to the praise of superior talents—and in exactly the same degree does it supply the evidence of his deficiency in original genius.

I extract a portion of the description to which I have already adverted as being especially excellent.

"In the broad and magnificent street called the Boompies, planted with a noble mall, and commanding delightful views of the opposite country, stood the house of Mynbeer Adrian Beverning, one of the burgomasters of the city, and the merchant to whom his letter of introduction was addressed. The mansion, partly built in the old Spanish style with gable ends embattled in front, and en-

larged by subsequent additions in the Dutch taste, formed a huge, unwieldy pile of massy construction, flanked round with a little suburb of counting houses and offices at the bottom, and terminated at top by a range of warehouses for light goods, to whose walls cranes were affixed. The intermediate stories, fronted by projecting balconies handsomely decorated, and embellished with beautiful shrubs and flowers, seemed to be appropriated to the residence of the family. Ringing at the principal entrance, Jocelyn was surprised to find himself ushered into a spacious marble hall, whence a broad flight of steps of the same material, adorned with gilt balustrades, conducted to the other apartments. Early as was the hour, Mr. Beverning, he was informed, was not only up, but employed in superintending the landing of some goods, though he would doubtless see Jocelyn immediately if he sent in his letter of introduction. This was accordingly done, and in a few minutes after he was ushered up stairs.

“The apartment which he now entered was hung round with cabinet pictures of the Flemish and Dutch schools, and opened by a folding window upon the flat-leaded roofs of the counting houses. At this aperture, in an arm-chair of embroidered velvet, with a small desk and papers before him, sat the burgomaster, a portly, not to say a somewhat burly looking, personage, attired in a green cap edged with lace, a flowered damask morning-gown lined with green silk, a tabinet waistcoat, trunk-hose, and green velvet slippers. His commanding height, his large and rather corpulent figure, his peaked grizzled beard, a certain appearance of richness in his costume, and the sparkling of a magnificent diamond-ring, which he wore upon the little finger of either hand, imparted a degree of grandeur and superiority to his look, which Jocelyn had little expected to contemplate, and which in his estimation did but ill assort with the pipe in his mouth, (although it was a richly embossed meerschau,) the silver spitting-dish at his feet, and the burning turf in a little porcelain vase, which was to relume that pipe in case it should be extinguished. Stately however, as was his appearance, the expression of his countenance was good-humoured, and his manner frank, even to familiarity.”

Vol. 2. P. 241-2-3.

L A C O N ,

OR, MANY THINGS IN FEW WORDS.

Sept. 7, 1826.

I AM not sure whether the very high estimation I have formed of Mr. Colton's book be not partly attributable to the cause ingeniously assigned by himself for the reputation of many others—namely, the writer's good memory and the reader's want of it. However this may be, I incline to place Lacon very much indeed in the foreground of most of the recent publications which I have read. It is very strikingly and honourably contrasted with the great current of books of the day, by strictly verifying its second title, while they would equally well deserve the converse one of "few things in many words." It combines in a great degree the rarely united qualities of judgment and imagination. The latter power sometimes sparkles with a playfulness and brilliancy very nearly approaching genuine wit, and is the more excellent from being always illustrative of the reflection that introduces it. In almost any other department of writing, the great compression of style and laboured antithesis of Lacon, might be chargeable with quaintness and pedantry; but apophthegms not only justify but perhaps require this style. It is, as the author somewhere expresses himself, the best for fixing them in the memory and laying them up for ordinary purposes. I have made a free use of Lacon in my commonplaces, nevertheless I have been compelled to give insertion here to a passage much exceeding the prescribed limits, by the thorough assent which its propositions have obtained from my opinion.

Subjoined to the detached aphorisms which together constitute the work entitled "Lacon," is a criticism on the earlier cantos of Don Juan. It is candid and discriminating: full of cordial attestations to the genius of Lord Byron and thereby claiming for the author the more credit and attention when he animadverts, as he severely does, upon his faults. This critique is written in a flowing, unaf-

fect manner and proves that when it suits his purpose Mr. Colton can acquit himself creditably without any aid from antithesis or play upon words.

A short poem on the burning of Moscow succeeds the critique and winds up the whole. It made no impression on me; but poetry, unless of the highest order, never does; so I shall say nothing about it.

“Men whose reputation stands deservedly high as writers, have often miserably failed as speakers: their pens seem to have been enriched at the expense of their tongues. Addison and Gibbon attempted oratory in the senate, only to fail. ‘*The good speakers,*’ says Gibbon, ‘filled me with despair; the bad ones with apprehension.’ And in more modern times, the powerful depicor of Harold, and the elegant biographer of Leo, both have failed in oratory; the capital of the former is so great, in many things, that he can afford to fail in one. But, in return, many reasons might be offered to reconcile that contradiction which my subject seems to involve. In the first place, those talents that constitute a fine writer, are more distinct from those that constitute an orator, than might be at first supposed; I admit that they are sometimes accidentally, but never necessarily combined. That the qualifications for writing, and those for eloquence, are in many points distinct, would appear from the converse of the proposition, for there have been many fine speakers who have proved themselves bad writers. There is good ground for believing that Mr. Pitt would not have shone as an author; and the attempt of Mr. Fox in that *arena*, has added nothing to his celebrity. Abstraction of thought, seclusion from popular tumult, occasional retirement to a study, a diffidence in our own opinions, a deference to those of other men, a sensibility that feels every thing, a humility that arrogates nothing, are necessary qualifications for a writer; but their very opposites would perhaps be preferred by an orator. He that has spent much of his time in his study, will seldom be collected enough to think in a crowd, or confident enough to talk in one. We may also add, that mistakes of the pen in the study, may be committed without publicity, and rectified without humiliation. But mistakes of the tongue, committed in the senate, never escape with impunity. ‘*Fugit irrevocabile verbum.*’ Eloquence, to produce

her full effect, should start from the head of the orator, as Pallas from the brain of Jove, completely armed and equipped. Diffidence, therefore, which is so able a Mentor to the writer, would prove a dangerous counsellor to the orator. As writers, the most timid may boggle twenty times in a day with their pen; and it is their own fault if it be known even to their valet; but, as orators, if they chance to boggle once with their tongue, the detection is as public as the delinquency; the punishment is irremissible and immediately follows the offence. It is the knowledge and the fear of this, that destroys their eloquence as orators, who have sensibility and taste for writing, but neither collectedness nor confidence for speaking; for fear not only magnifies difficulties, but diminishes our power to overcome them, and thus doubly debilitates her victims. But another cause of their deficiency as orators, who have shone as writers, '*mole ruunt sud*;' they know that they have a character to support, by their tongue, which they have previously gained by their pen. They rise determined to attempt more than other men, and for that very reason they effect less, and doubly disappoint their hearers. They miss of that which is clear and obvious and appropriate, in a laboured search after that which is far-fetched, recondite and refined; like him that would fain give us better bread than can be made of wheat. Affectation is the cause of this error, disgust its consequence, and disgrace its punishment."

V. 2. N^o. 108.

MÉMOIRES DE SÉGUR.

Octob. 11, 1826.

THESE memoirs did not afford me much entertainment and very little instruction. Unfortunately for the author's claims to novelty, he lived in the most unfavourable of all ages for successfully asserting them upon historical subjects. Born in 1753, M. De Ségur commenced his political career in 1774, and brings his memoirs down to the year 1783, when he was fulfilling the office of Ambassador in Russia. During this interval he was partly a courtier

among the brilliant circle that surrounded Louis XVI. and his unfortunate consort at their accession ; for some time waging war in North America, and then placed on the embassy to Petersburg. Now the situation of France at the accession of Louis XVI. is from its being so quickly followed by the revolution, one of the best known portions of modern history : the other great revolution in the western world has shed scarcely an inferior light upon all events connected with it : and the extraordinary character and achievements of the Empress Catherine of Russia, have made her life and times a matter of curiosity and research to the least diligent historical inquirer. I am therefore borne out in saying that M. de Ségur lived in an age which requires no historical elucidation, and his memoirs are singularly destitute of all exposition of the smaller machinery which he must have been enabled to trace and with which alone the reading public could now be interested. His materials are therefore not new, and his reflections upon them as little so. With the French love of contrast and taste for drawing in chalk and charcoal we have early in the work a gorgeous account of the brilliancy of the French court in the early reign of Louis XVI. and then a sudden reference to its direful close : the now thread-bare stories of the breaking down of the scaffolding and the prognostics (made after the event, I suppose,) to which that fatality gave birth—the disgusting and disgraceful apotheosis of Voltaire, that most over-puffed man of a nation extravagant in all its feelings—are all re-told with the minuteness of an original relator ; and the old causes of the revolution—the infusion of liberty caused by the American war, Necker's publication of the state of the finances, the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau and their impious confederates,—all copied in good set phrase from so many precedent authors.

With all due deduction from these causes, Mr. de Ségur's work is not destitute of merit. It is perspicuously written and excels in plain narrative, but he is not a profound or philosophic thinker, nor can he be ranked among those who have supplied any stores of facts elucidatory of the events of their own age.

There is a very able and well written detail of the causes which gave so permanent a result to the American revolution and the advantages which a new country like that had over all established governments in effecting a change in its constitution. I have only room for a part.

“Par un hasard étonnant, la nouvelle république de l'Amérique du Nord, fondée dans son origine non par la conquête, mais par les transactions du pacifique Penn, n'a eu à combattre, à vaincre aucun de ces obstacles. Les législateurs, travaillant dans un siècle de lumières, sans se voir obligés de triompher d'un pouvoir militaire, de limiter une autorité absolue, de dépouiller un clergé dominant de sa puissance, une noblesse de ses droits, une foule de familles de leurs fortunes, et de construire leur nouvel édifice sur des débris cimentés de sang, ont pu fonder leurs institutions sur les principes de la raison, de la complète liberté, de l'égalité politique; aucun vieux préjugé, aucun fantôme antique ne se plaçait entr'eux et la lumière de la vérité. Un seul effort, une seule guerre, pour secouer le joug de la mère-patrie, a suffi pour les affranchir de toute gêne; et leurs lois, faites uniquement dans le but de l'intérêt général, ont été tracées sur une table rase, sans être arrêtées par nul esprit de classes, de sectes, de partis ou d'intérêts privés.”

Vol. 1. P. 573.

TALBOT'S RESIDENCE IN CANADA.

Octob. 24, 1826.

FROM internal evidence, I should be much disposed to doubt whether Mr. Edward Allen Talbot's work will ever rank as a text-book upon the actual or prospective situation of Canada. The “questionable shape” of his information results chiefly from an apparent anxiety to refute every precedent writer on the same subjects and to grumble and cavil at every possible entity. His propensity to decry the evidence of his fellow labourers is indeed carried to the length of self contradiction when he has to deal with conflicting accounts of their's. Mr. Talbot has taken a very extensive field of communication. The climate, soil, agriculture and natural history of the Canadas are very minutely commented on, and the moral, political and physical condition of the people not less so. The result of Mr. Talbot's information would be to leave few inducements indeed to emigration from the parent countries :

according to him, none but a person uniting the characters of a small capitalist with a power of *omnifeasance* in works of handicraft, can hope to realize a fortune there; and as these two requisites are seldom, if ever, found conjoined, his opinion would seem to amount to a prohibition of emigration in general. His reasoning may be taken *in brief*, to be as follows :—The settler must be a man of a certain capital to entitle him to a grant of lands, or a location, as it is termed : and he must be adroit enough to clear his land and construct his log-house himself : otherwise the high wages of labour will absorb all his profits. Again—the capital which the emigrant takes with him should not be large; or much more than sufficient to effect the purchase of about 1200 acres of uncleared land, a mean quantity, sufficient for the support of a family and not so large as to require the aid of much hired labour in its reclamation. Money lent out at interest yields only six per cent : thus it is very plain, as Mr. Talbot argues, that taking into account the general system of harter by which transactions are carried on without the intervention of a currency, and the high price of labour, a large capitalist does much wiser to live upon its produce in England, than to transport it and himself to a country where he will have to submit to a total privation of every thing like comfort, for some years at least, and where he will be obliged to maintain an intercourse, to rear his family, and ultimately form connexions with a people whose manners would seem as revolting to a cultivated mind, as their morals are to a religious or well-regulated one.

On Mr. Talbot's authority it would appear that from the negligence and mismanagement of the government in Canada, that country is rather retrograding than otherwise in moral and statistical cultivation, and that from the rapid advances making by the neighbouring United States in all that constitutes national respectability, the probability (though most flatly and loyally denied by Mr. Talbot,) is every day gaining strength of the Canadas being conquered by the republicans in the event of a rupture between these and Great Britain; a consummation devoutly to be wished for, if the two countries are really in the relative state described in this work.

The style of Mr. Talbot's book evinces, I think, his being a man of some reading, although it is not such as to prefer for him a

claim to much natural talent. He is always too wordy, and more so in proportion to the insignificance of the point in discussion. He has besides a habit of overlaying his subject with a smirking kind of self-sufficiency that renders him far from an amiable writer.

I extract, nearly at random, some general remarks upon Upper Canada.

"Upper Canada is a level country, and its general appearance is sombre and uninviting. From Kingston, as far as the Western extremity of the province, one or two places excepted, you travel through a continued forest; the prospect is in consequence never extensive, but commonly confined within the limits of a single mile. But

‘*Time and Industry*, the mighty two,
Which bring our wishes nearer to our view,’

may very soon effect a considerable change,—although *years* have rolled on and found it the same, and *industry*—*Canadian industry*, I mean—has in many instances left it so; for no marked visible change has been effected in the aspect of this highly favoured province. Blessed with the most fertile soil upon the face of the earth, its lazy occupants seem satisfied if they can derive from its productiveness the mere necessities of life,—the bare supports of animal existence. These, as well as the comforts of life, it yields them almost spontaneously; and, in the midst of their plenty, they never think of ornamenting, or even properly cultivating, their fertile estates. In many parts which I could point out, the soil is so exuberant, and the season so propitious, both to the growth and the preservation of crops, that the life of its inhabitants is literally that of Cowper's happy pair :

‘They eat, and drink, and sleep,—what then?
Why, eat, and drink, and sleep again.’

V. 1. P. 148-9.

CHANNING'S DISCOURSE

ON THE EVIDENCES OF REVEALED RELIGION.

Oct. 27, 1826.

I BELIEVE the sincerest reflecting Christians are occasionally assailed by doubts concerning the very rudiments of their belief. How distressing these doubts must be to a being persuaded that his salvation is conditioned upon their exclusion, needs not to be insisted upon, nor consequently how gladly a person subject to their influences must hail the acquisition of such an auxiliary as Dr. Channing; in whose discourse on revelation, without the necessity of any painful effort at recollection for following up long and intricate processes of reasoning to arrive at perhaps a doubtful conclusion, the reader will find the bulwarks of his faith impreguably defended, and his conviction enforced by means of a few, plain, incontestable propositions, leading by inevitable inference to a conclusion which they make manifest even before its enunciation.

It is not, I think, easy to imagine a more durable monument to the head and heart; to the intelligence and sensibility at once of its author, than Doctor Channing has reared to himself within the limits of a single lecture, the careful perusal of which will not occupy more than an hour. It is full of the closest reasoning, the newest and yet the clearest views, and the deepest pathos. In this last kind nothing can surpass the analysis of the life and character of Jesus Christ; in the two first respects, the vindication of miracles, and the refutation of Hume are masterpieces.

It is almost superfluous to praise the style of a work whose matter is of such paramount excellence, because the connexion between style and sentiment is so intimate, that the one cannot attain great eminence without proportionally exalting the other. It is indeed, I think, altogether to this cause that the style of Dr. Channing owes its praise. He does not himself appear to have been very solicitous

about it ; some of his sentences being carelessly constructed, and one at least of them absolutely ungrammatical. He has also a disagreeable habit of reiterating the relative *which*, a practice easily avoided by a slight re-modelling of the phrase. But these are as spots on the sun's disk, and although Dr. Channing never did and never should write another page, he may boldly refer to this lecture to vindicate for him one of the first places among the champions of Christianity.

It will not however be enough to dismiss a work so deserving of being treasured up in the memory, with a general panegyric. I shall therefore, for my own future advantage, endeavour to make something of an abstract—a task of some difficulty, considering how much of the work of compression the author has himself performed.

The treatise commences by a statement of the necessity of admitting miracles to be the basis of Christianity, and a concession that if they cannot be sustained, the whole fabric, notwithstanding the admitted force of internal evidence, must fall to the ground. The two main objections to the reception of miracles are supposed by Dr. Channing to be : 1. the popular tendency existing at all times to admit miracles without examination ; 2. the progress of natural philosophy, by which many apparent deviations from the course of nature are reconciled to the rules of pre-established order. The first objection is answered by showing that it never was the habit of the vulgar to adopt miracles as it were *per se*, or without the annexation of some circumstances which engage the imagination or the passions. The incredulity of the most superstitious vulgar upon some subjects divested of these concomitants, as for instance, the vaccine inoculation, is adduced in support of this opinion ; and it is further ingeniously argued, that admitting the prevalence of this credulity, it affords an evidence that it must originally have emanated from experience. With respect to the second cause of scepticism, or the increasingly ascertained uniformity of nature, it is contended that to any one that admits the supremacy of God, the uniformity of nature's operations proves no more than that having constructed machinery the best adapted to his ordinary purposes, he thinks fit habitually to employ it in the effectuation of them ; but when a particular occasion arises for which the ordinary functions of nature must be inadequate, then that very uniformity,

so far from furnishing an argument against its interruption, will rather lead to a contrary inference—rather teach us to expect that it will be violated in the letter, though not in the spirit, because in the case supposed, the ends for which it was instituted will be best promoted by such violation. It is laid down that the improvement of intelligent beings, or of *mind*, *must* have been God's first object in the creation, and it is beautifully shown that this object would be best effected by a *general* regularity in the succession of natural events, and by a *particular* interruption to that regularity. By the general regularity we are kept in mind that these events are not governed by chance: by the particular interruption, we are prevented from falling into that state of negligence and inattention which invariable order is calculated to produce. It is next shown that the order of the natural world could not clearly exhibit either the special providence of God in our regard, or demonstrate the immortality of the soul. Hence there was an occasion for Christ's mission and for a suspension of the natural order to authenticate that mission by means of miracles.

Mr. Hume's celebrated argument against miracles universally, is next stated and answered. This part of the discourse is executed with extraordinary logical acumen, and so triumphantly defeats the sceptic, that I mean to transcribe it fully in my extract, and shall therefore not attempt any abridgment. The author then leaves the consideration of miracles in general to enter upon a discussion of the evidences in support of Christianity, which he says are all reducible to the cardinal principle that *Every effect must have an adequate cause*; and he contends that no cause short of the interposition of the supreme Being will be found sufficient to explain such an effect as the foundation and diffusion of Christianity. Out of the various particulars connected with the institution of the gospel, and inexplicable on the supposition of mere human powers and principles, the character of Jesus is selected as an illustration. I have already expressed my admiration of the surpassing beauty and tenderness of this portion of the work, and I shall not deface it by lopping off its ornaments to preserve the mere solid trunk of the reasoning. The proof that the character of Christ was a real, not a fictitious one, is inferred from these principal facts:—It was a character in advance of the times in which it appeared and of the historians by whom it has been transmitted a character, the beauty

of which has been appreciated according to the progress of our refinement in moral sentiments. To suppose it an invention is to suppose its historians to have attained to a singular elevation and delicacy of moral feeling, a supposition quite irreconcilable with the character of habitual liars and impostors; and furthermore, there could have existed no adequate motive for such an invention. The dissertation concludes with some admirable reflections upon the adaptation of religion to the improved state of society; the direct and internal evidence in support of the veracity of the New Testament, and the conviction of the truth of religion which arises and gains strength in those who apply it to their minds and temper; which conviction is termed a *feeling* of its truth.

If the quantity of valuable matter in this lecture were in the usual proportion to the quantity of words, I must be supposed to have devoted an exorbitantly large space to this abstract. But the author's conciseness precluded mine, and after all I have written, I even now regretfully take leave of some exquisite passages which I should be anxious to transcribe. Indeed I am satisfied that every word of the discourse might be impressed on the memory with a result equally beneficial to the morals and the taste.

The following is the promised extract :

“Before quitting the general consideration of miracles, I ought to take some notice of Hume’s celebrated argument on this subject; not that it merits the attention which it has received, for infidelity has seldom forged a weaker weapon; but because it is specious, and has derived weight from the name of its author. The argument is briefly this,—‘That belief is founded upon and regulated by experience. Now we often experience testimony to be false, but never witness a departure from the order of nature. That men may deceive us when they testify to miracles, is therefore more accordant with experience, than that nature should be irregular; and hence there is a balance of proof against miracles, a presumption so strong as to outweigh the strongest testimony.’—The usual replies to this argument, I have not time to repeat. Dr. Campbell’s work, which is accessible to all, will show you that it rests on an equivocal use of terms; and will furnish you with many fine remarks on testimony, and on the condition or qualities which give it validity. I will only add a few remarks, which seem to me worthy of attention.

"1. This argument affirms, that the credibility of facts or statements is to be decided by their accordance with the established order of nature, and by this standard only. Now if nature comprehended all existences and all powers, this position might be admitted. But if there is a Being higher than nature, the origin of all its power and motions, and whose character falls under our notice and experience as truly as the creation, then there is an additional standard, to which facts and statements are to be referred; and works, which violate nature's order, will still be credible, if they agree with the known properties and attributes of its author; because for such works we can assign an adequate cause and sufficient reasons, and these are the qualities and conditions on which credibility depends.

"2. The argument of Hume proves too much, and therefore proves nothing. It proves too much; for if I am to reject the strongest testimony to miracles, because testimony has often deceived me, whilst nature's order has never been found to fail, then I ought to reject a miracle, even if I should see it with my own eyes, and if all my senses should attest it; for all my senses have sometimes given false reports, whilst nature has never gone astray; and therefore, be the circumstances ever so decisive or inconsistent with deception, still I must not believe what I see, and hear, and touch; what my senses, exercised according to the most deliberate judgment, declare to be true. All this the argument requires.—And it proves too much; for disbelief, in the case supposed, is out of our power, and is instinctively pronounced absurd; and what is more, it would subvert that very order of nature on which the argument rests; for this order of nature is learned only by the exercise of my senses and judgment, and if these fail me, in the most unexceptionable circumstances, then their testimony to nature is of little worth.

"Once more; this argument is built on an ignorance of the nature of testimony, and it is surprising that this error has not been more strikingly exposed. Testimony, we are told, cannot prove a miracle. Now the truth is, that testimony, of itself and immediately, proves no fact whatever, not even the most common. Testimony can do nothing more than show us the state of another's mind in regard to a given fact. It can only show us that the testifier has a belief, a conviction, that a certain phenomenon or event

has occurred. Here testimony stops ; and the reality of the event is to be judged altogether from the nature and degree of this conviction, and from the circumstances under which it exists. This conviction is an effect, which must have a cause, and needs to be explained ; and if no cause can be found out but the real occurrence of the event, then this occurrence is admitted as true. Such is the extent of testimony. Now a man, who affirms a miraculous phenomenon or event, may give us just as decisive proofs, by his character and conduct, of the strength and depth of his conviction, as if he were affirming a common occurrence. Testimony then does just as much in the case of miracles as of common events ; that is, it discloses to us the conviction of another's mind. Now this conviction in the case of miracles, requires a cause, an explanation, as much as in every other ; and if the circumstances be such, that it could not have sprung up and been established but by the reality of the alleged miracle, then that great and fundamental principle of human belief, namely, that every effect must have a cause, compels us to admit the miracle."

P. 18, 19, 20, 21.

DENHAM AND CLAPPERTON'S TRAVELS IN AFRICA.

Decemb. 24, 1826.

THE two names prefixed to this article are the survivors of three persons who in the year 1821 were despatched by the British government to follow up the discoveries of Mungo Park in central Africa, by penetrating to the supposed termination of his discoveries by another course. A Doctor Oudney, a physician and man of science, was added to those two gentlemen, who are both of the military profession, for the purpose of supplying the details of the geological and botanical phenomena which should occur, but he was carried off early in the expedition by a pulmonary complaint, and thus the work appears in a form more attractive perhaps to

the general than to the scientific reader. A sentiment which never once forsakes us during the progress of these two volumes, is one of admiration at the conduct of those two enterprising men, who with an inflexible determination to fulfil their twofold commission, of extending the field of discovery already open, and of establishing an amicable relation between the British empire and the nations which they traversed, permitted no surmountable obstacle to retard their progress and no provocation to ruffle their good humour. The effects of their good sense and tact seem to have been fully adequate to their highest hopes. Wherever they went they soon succeeded in inspiring friendship towards themselves and respect for their sovereign, and it is pretty certain that should Great Britain succeed in establishing a mart on the southern coast of Africa, she will have no great difficulty in forming close commercial relations with the interior, and that mainly through the amicable disposition engendered and cultivated by Messrs. Denham and Clapperton. A very favorable picture is exhibited on the whole of the character of the central Africans. They are hospitable, although well aware of the value of property; candid in bestowing praise on whatever of new or uncommon they were made understand the uses, and what is rare amongst savages, generally observant of their engagements. Two characters introduced quite conquer our affections—those of Boo Khaloom, the leader of the escort from Tripoli to Bornou, and El Kanemy, the Sheikh or Sultan of the latter country. This man seems indeed to have combined qualifications for sovereignty rarely found united among the most civilized people. He was inflexibly just, politic and brave. Never rashly entering into warfare with his neighbours, and always desirous of terminating hostilities by treaty. The African women, to whom much of this work is devoted, are described in very glowing terms by both writers—Major Denham however seems to have been the most interested observer of their charms, and indeed leads pretty directly to the inference that his observations were as seldom as might be confined to visual ones. Of the style of these volumes I do not say anything. It is not to be expected that persons so engaged in actions should be very complete masters of words. The good sense however which appears to characterize these travellers in other particulars, prevents their committing themselves in this by any straining or effort at flights beyond their strength. Their diction is uniformly simple

and perspicuous, and I believe never once transgresses a grammatical rule.

The following is the commencement of an epitomised account of the kingdom of Bornou, which was the most southerly part to which the mission extended their journey.

“Bornou, a kingdom of Central Africa, is comprehended, in its present state, between the 15th and 10th parallel northern latitude, and the 12th and 18th of east longitude. It is bounded on the north by part of Kanem and the desert; on the east, by the lake Tchad, which covers several thousand miles of country, and contains many inhabited islands; on the south east by the kingdom of Loggun and the river Shary, which divides Bornou from the kingdom of Begharmi, and loses itself in the waters of the Tchad; on the south by Mandara, an independent kingdom, situated at the foot of an extensive ridge of primitive mountains, and on the west by Soudan. The heat is excessive, but not uniform, from March to the end of June, being the period when the sun has most powers. At this season, about two hours after noon, the thermometer will rise sometimes to 105 and 107, and suffocating and scorching winds from the south and south-east prevail. The nights are dreadfully oppressive; the thermometer not falling much below 100°, until a few hours before daylight, when 86 or 88 denote comparative freshness. Towards the middle of May, Bornou is visited by violent tempests of thunder, lightning, and rain. Yet in such a dry state is the earth at this time, and so quickly is the water absorbed, that the inhabitants scarcely feel the inconvenience of the season. Considerable damage is done to the cattle and the people by the lightning. They now prepare the ground for their corn, and it is all in the earth before the end of June, when the lakes and rivers begin to overflow, and from the extreme flatness of the country, tracts of many miles are quickly converted into large lakes of water. Nearly constant rains now deluge the land with cloudy, damp, sultry weather. The winds are hot and violent and generally from the east and south.

“In October the winter season commences; the rains are less frequent, and the harvest near the towns is got in; the air is milder and more fresh, the weather serene: breezes blow from the north-west and with a clearer atmosphere. Towards December, and in the

beginning of January, Bornou is colder than from its situation might be expected. The thermometer will at no part of the day mount higher than 74 or 75, and in the morning descends to 58 and 60.

“It is these cold fresh winds from the north and north-west that restore health and strength to the inhabitants, who suffer during the damp weather with dreadful attacks of fever and ague, which carry off great numbers every year. The inhabitants are numerous; the principal towns or cities are thirteen. Ten different languages, or dialects of the same language, are spoken in the empire. The Shouaas have brought with them the Arabic, which they speak nearly pure. They are divided into tribes, and bear still the names of some of the most formidable of the Bedouin hordes of Egypt. They are a deceitful, arrogant, and cunning race; great charm writers; and by pretending to a natural gift of prophecy, they find an easy entrance into the houses of the black inhabitants of the towns, where their pilfering propensities soon show themselves. The strong resemblance they bear, both in features and habits, to some of our gipsy tribes, is particularly striking. It is said that Bornou can muster 15000 Shouaas in the field mounted. They are the greatest breeders of cattle in the country, and annually supply Soudan with from two to three thousand horses. The Bornou people, or Kanorwg, as they are called, have large unmeaning faces, with fat Negro noses, and mouths of great dimensions with good teeth, and high foreheads. They are peaceable, quiet, and civil. They salute each other with courteousness and warmth; and there is a remarkable good-natured heaviness about them which is interesting. They are no warriors, but revengeful; and the best of them given to commit petty larcenies, on every opportunity that offers. They are extremely timid, so much so, that on an Arab once speaking harshly to one of them, he came the next day to ask if he wished to kill him.

“In their manner of living, they are simple in the extreme. Flour made into a paste, sweetened with honey, and fat poured over it, is a dish for a sultan. The use of bread is not known; therefore but little wheat is grown. Indeed it is found only in the houses of the great. Barley is also scarce; a little is sown between the wheat, and is used, when bruised, to take off the brackish taste of the water.”

THE TOR HILL.

Dec. 25, 1826.

IF a novel were to take rank according to its merits as a work of style and language merely, the *Tor Hill* might arrogate a station among the highest classes. Its diction flows uniformly with uncommon grace and perfect perspicuity, and its sentences are constructed with that consummate art which quite conceals itself, or is only felt in the pleasurable sensation which their fine rhythmical cadence inspires. And here, I believe, the language of unqualified praise must cease. As a work of graphical delineation, of consistency and nice discrimination of individual portraiture, and of variety and impressiveness of incident, *The Tor Hill* falls far short of *Brambletye House*. Even on the score of originality it is inferior; not as being actually less original, for this were hardly possible, but as being copied from less excellent models. Sir Walter Scott is not now as formerly, the only archetype: Godwin is plagiarised with perhaps still more servility: the principal character, that of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, is quite a production of his strange laboratory. The evil and the ease of copying are here fully felt in the imitation being only perfect in the defects of the original. The character mentioned is drawn with all the disregard to probability, exaggeration of moral feature and infraction of the canons of good taste, for which Godwin is censurable; but we look in vain for that intense energy and that powerful dramatic effect which in Godwin take a sufficient grasp of our sympathies to convert our very condemnation into applause. As might be expected from the kind of double plagiarism with which the *Tor Hill* is chargeable, it is remarkable for a want of unity. It has two heroes; not in the usual way in which two individuals of nearly equal prominence to the effectuation of the final event are introduced, clashing together and circumventing each other; but two personages, each of them claimants on our good will, and each a sufficient pivot for the plot to turn upon, but one of whom is thrown en-

tirely into the shade when the affairs of the other are brought into prominence.

From the length of time that elapsed between the perusal of the book and the methodisation of the few foregoing remarks, I am not able to extend them into anything of a more regular criticism; nor, from the work being out of my reach, can I make any extract.

BOADEN'S LIFE OF MRS. SIDDONS.

Feb. 6, 1827.

It is, I believe, a general usage among biographers, at least such of them as do not qualify the title *life* with that of *literary*, *political*, *dramatic*, or something equally restrictive, to await the termination of their hero's or heroine's existence, before they promulgate their labours. Our thoughts and actions may be said emphatically to constitute part of our personal property, of which the offices of executorship can only arise from our decease. It is also a common supposition, that as executorship in its ordinary sense, supposes some confidence, or at least intimacy between the parties concerned; the same relations should subsist between the biographer and the person whose memoirs he writes, or in that literary administration I have spoken of. Mr. Boaden, however, dispenses with all this: recollecting that rules emanate from men of genius for ordinary beings to follow, he boldly swerves from all precedent; publishes the *life* of a lady still in being: a life avowedly written without her having been art or part in the business, or even having (as far as appears by the context,) a common acquaintance with its modest writer. Under such circumstances to compose a work free from many glaring blemishes would be perhaps impossible: the violation of unity, by the introduction of much irrelevant matter, is a fault which not even the highest genius could entirely avoid. But when there is no redeeming talent in the author; when he sits down to write under an attractive title what has little more relation to that title than to fifty others that might be prefixed

to it; when the extraneous matter which I have supposed inevitable where there was so total a destitution of appropriate materials, has little or no merit in itself and is unsparingly enlisted to the extension of the book to two large octavos—that the work so constructed must be a total failure, requires small powers of drawing inferences to conclude. Mr. Boaden is not much more meritorious in the execution than in the plan of his memoir. Although a practised, he is not an agreeable writer: his sentences are neither vigorous nor graceful. Perhaps the only very commendable achievement he has here performed, and at all events it is by far the best part of his task, is the analysis of those dramas of Shakespeare in which Mrs. Siddons was the most eminently distinguished. In these, a great familiarity with the poet's text and a close observation of the manner in which it was given by the actress, enable Mr. Boaden to exhibit very striking, and to the actor, I should think, very instructive, dramatic sketches. In these moreover, a combined admiration of the genius of the creator and the personifier raise the describer's powers many degrees above their average pitch, and occasionally exalt his style to something very near eloquence.

Mr. Boaden declares he has written the above work as a companion to his life of Mr. Kemble, and that the popular reception of the latter was his encouragement for so doing. If the same cause should again operate, we may expect a life of each member of this prolific Thespian family in turn, and certainly if the public choose to take dross for ore, they alone are to blame although Mr. Boaden should remorselessly persevere in inundating the press with his anilities.

These memoranda have run so much into arrear, that I shall have no opportunity of making any citation from the first six or seven works commented on.

TALES OF THE O'HARA FAMILY.

(SECOND SERIES.)

Feb. 19, 1827.

MR. BANIM possesses a vivid, though neither a creative nor a regulated imagination; and a power of exhibiting scenes in which human agency is wrought into a species of convulsive energy, with uncommon impressiveness. He has, besides, a familiar acquaintance with certain modifications of the Irish character, by which he is enabled to present some comic delineations of low life with no little fidelity. These however are "few and far between." His mind is of that habitually excited temperament that does not long rest satisfied with scenes of contentedness and enjoyment. Violent emotion—the workings of the darker and guiltier passions are the atmosphere in which it most freely expatiates. Perhaps the term most fully and unequivocally characteristic of Mr. Banim's genius is *melodramatic*. He possesses no originality, and as little power of constructing a story. In the development of the plot we find none of that ingenious concatenation with which the skilful inventor makes one incident the natural forerunner of its successor. On the contrary every transition is harsh, abrupt, and violent, and in the catastrophe to which all tend, the realms of probability are recklessly forsaken to mount up to the very wildest summits of extravagance.

The characters which prefer any title to attention are all palpable plagiaries. A watercolour copy of Jenny Deans enacts the heroine of the longest and best of the tales, and Aby Nowlan, spirited and entertaining as he is, is not less obviously imitated from Miss Edgeworth, although this fact having escaped the reviewers, their praise of the conception is proportionably unqualified. For the bold, presumptuous competition with Scott perceptible in the entire construction of those tales, the only requisite discernible is that of strong but undisciplined imagination. We seek vainly for that anti-

quarian lore through which the genius of the Ariosto of the north, like the sun's ray, beaming through a gothic painted window, sheds such rich and mellow radiance upon the objects it strikes. We find none of that tact by which, without apparent effort, the great master of modern fiction makes each individual say and do exactly that which is most conducive to the development of his peculiar character and to the progress and maturation of the events to which it is made subservient.

The writer under notice manifests as little of that kindliness of nature which is infused into almost every line of his model, and makes him as ameliorating to the heart as he is delightful to the fancy of his reader.

In one word, Mr. Banim's writings bespeak a strong, though coarse and unpolished texture of mind, and a total ignorance as well of the manners of the higher classes of society, as of the effects which refined education and the usages of polished life have in modifying, if not altogether repressing the workings of an originally vicious disposition.

THE ENGLISH IN ITALY.

Feb. 24, 1827.

IF a joint stock authorship were established between the writer of these volumes and the one last under consideration, in which each would evince sufficient self-knowledge and estimate of his colleague's powers, to divide the business according to the respective abilities of the parties, the public might expect a very meritorious supply of the lighter wares of literature. Lord Normanby (if he be indeed the writer of this book,) is endued with tact, judgment, refined taste and accurate knowledge of the circumstances and feelings of the superior grades of society. He prefers no claims either to highly descriptive or highly impassioned imagery. His personages are all of the aristocratic class to which he himself belongs; of that order which, by an exemption from the more stirring trials of life, and by the masquerade of conventional rules, is

restrained from almost all natural play of the passions—supposing that the sophistications of fashionable education left many traits of nature behind them for occasional manifestation. It is therefore rather to the credit of the author's judgment, than a derogation from his talent, that his representations in their accuracy should be chargeable with the very faults that belong to their originals—the faults of insipidity and resemblance to a general and almost invariable type. An amiable-minded, highly-educated and beautiful young woman falling a victim to seduction, and forfeiting her place in society to retire with a sated lover—another, revolted by the relaxed morality of foreign manners, to which she is forced to submit to please a foreign husband :—These are both characters susceptible of great pathetic interest; but we never are chained down to their adventures as we are bound to those for better for worse in whom we are presented with strong images of natural feeling called into situations where life or death are at issue; or borne along by the uncontrolled agency of human passion. What Lord Normanby has attempted, he has however fully achieved. He has given a correct and pleasing portraiture of high life; and if we suffer interruptions without regret in the progress of his relations, and end them without any very deep impression of their matter, it is rather imputable to the selection of the subjects than to the execution bestowed on them.

PAUL'S LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK.

Feb. 28, 1827.

To assert that an account of an excursion to Paris made in 1814 is an agreeable and interesting recreation in 1827, is to bestow no trifling, and yet in the present instance, no exaggerated praise; so much truth is there in the maxim *Materiam superat opus*, when the artist is eminent in his vocation. These letters appear to me to contain an almost perfect model of the epistolary style; they are graceful and unaffected, full of extensive observation, original reflection, and above all, of that graphic skill which is one of the

highest attributes of poetry. We are constantly reminded of the author, by that vein of playful, good-natured humour, that constitutes so pervading a charm in his works of fiction. It would perhaps be impossible to adduce an instance of more dramatic skill, combining the functions of the poet and the painter into one powerful scenic sketch, than the account of the battle of Waterloo in one of these letters. Basil Hall's relation of the capture of the *Esmeralda* is perhaps equal in perspicuity, but the difficulty in preserving unity was infinitely greater to Scott, both as to the topographical details and the successive and complicated transactions in conjunction with them. In all this minuteness of description, the author avoids obscurity from conciseness, and vagueness from amplification, with equal address. He also evinces excellent judgment in the distribution of the characters to which he addresses himself. There is an old campaigner introduced, to whom the military matters are related; a lady is made the depository of all the observations relating to costume and manners; an old land-proprietor is informed upon the agriculture and statistics of France and the Netherlands, and so in other instances.

I select for a specimen, the following lively, but perhaps rather too national comparison between the metropolitan rivers of France and England.

“The Seine is usually appealed to by the Parisians as the principal beauty of their city, and it is at least one of its greatest conveniences. But Lord Chesterfield furnished an answer to the proud question whether England can show the like:—‘Yes—and we call it Fleet-ditch.’ This gasconade is like that of the French veteran lecturing upon invasion, who spits upon the ground, and says to his audience, “*Voilà la Tamise*,”—a hyperbole which may be excused from ignorance, as no French soldier has happened to see the Thames for many a century, excepting as a guest or a prisoner in England. But, laying jests aside, the Seine is far from having the majestic appearance of the Thames, being diminutive both in depth and breadth, and strait-waistcoated by a range of ungraceful quays, a greater deformity than those of London, because rendered conspicuous by the narrowness of the stream. The river being divided also at two intervals by small islands, completely occupied by buildings, we are induced to entertain a

contemptuous opinion of the Seine, as completely subjugated and tyrannised over by the despotic authority of human art. Several of the walks along its sides are nevertheless most interesting, particularly the Quai de Voltaire, from which the passenger views the superb and long extent of colonnade belonging to the Louvre, while farther down the river are seen the gardens of the Tuileries and the trees of les Champs Élysées.”

P. 306-7-8.

LLOYD'S LIFE OF ALEXANDER I.

March 2, 1827.

THE popularity of the late Emperor of Russia in England, adds one to the many proofs of the disregard with which mankind treat motives, and how thoroughly they are swayed by events. Of all the despots that Napoleon bound to his chariot-wheels, there was not one, who from the time he was threshed into subserviency, until his discovery that his abjectness could not purchase for him even the miserable preference of being left for the last victim, more eagerly lent himself to perform the behests of his tyrant, than Alexander ; not one whose devotedness seemed more prompted by personal attachment and less by calculating policy ; not one who, had he been allowed to remain a little longer in the dark as to his own meditated fate, appears to have been better disposed to concur in all projects of ambitious usurpation, to yield up the Lion's share and claim but the ass's, with a better grace than the “ coxcomb czar, the autocrat of waltzes and of war.” Above all, be it remembered—no one equalled him in following up the prescribed system of destroying England through her only vulnerable spot—her commerce. However Bonaparte unmasked too soon ; and the destruction of his army in his aggression upon Russia enabled Alexander and the other sovereigns of Europe to turn the tables and act offensively. In the war of reprisals which followed, Alexander, like all renegades, was foremost in activity and energy ; marched to Paris ; dictated a peace ; and was hailed as the magnanimous and the heroic all over Europe. Although England was

one of the loudest in this acclaim, it does look a little as if his favour there had died with him; or else could that most scribbling nation have left his historiography to such a person as avows himself the writer of this most contemptible production? a production marking as great a destitution of original talent as of information upon the subject matter, or indeed of any other kind of information gainable by a common education.

It is to be hoped this Mr. Lloyd publishes at his own expense, and that if he does, the loss of pelf from an unsaleable edition will terminate his biographical and other literary labours sempiternally.

As common grammatical correctness is indispensable to anything finding its way into this correspondence, I am precluded from any citation.

NATURE AND ART.

March 7, 1827.

THERE is much of that tenderness and domestic pathos in this tale which has since been so much more eminently developed in the writings of Mrs. Opie, and perhaps still more effectively in those of Mrs. Brunton. There is however, another source of the interest of "Nature and Art," paradoxical as it may appear when stated; and that is its excessive improbability. Now, without meaning to say that an improbable story, without any countervailing merit, is more readable than one which has merely to boast of some share of verisimilitude, yet I do think that when a writer secures a certain quantity of our sympathy for his characters, we are the more disposed to see their adventures to a conclusion, the less we are able to conjecture what that conclusion shall be; and that such inability will be proportioned to the author's disregard of congruency between causes and effects, is quite evident.

Perhaps, after all, this very novel and *deep* theory is only a suggestion of self-love to excuse me for having advanced one sentence in the story beyond the passage in which the heroine, a young lady of virtue and innocence, is made to declare herself the mother of an

illegitimate child, and to assign the paternity to her kindest friend and most honourable lover.

This however is not all, though the most glaringly absurd part of the whole. The hero is represented as continuing much longer a child of nature—or an ignoramus of all conventional rules, than any observant youth in his circumstances could possibly remain, and this has the further fault of lessening our respect for his understanding.

It is some excuse for Mrs. Inchbald's faults that her book was written about forty years ago—in the height of that eclipse which extended over novel writing with few intermittent gleams, from the time of Smollet to that of Sir Walter Scott. Had that great northern star then arisen, Mrs. Inchbald evinces intelligence enough to show that in common with inferior writers, she would have derived guidance and illumination from his powerful influence.

REYNOLDS'S MEMOIRS.

March 4, 1827.

WHEN a book on a novel plan has achieved popularity, it would be, I think, a wise resolution in a reader, absolutely to reject all others of a like construction that should appear for a year or two after the first. While the vogue lasts, there will be a host of greedy authors pressing on to avail themselves of it, and it is pretty plain that of wares got up to meet the sudden demand of a fleeting market, there can be none of that digested and prepared quality deserving of attention; much less entitled to permanent favour. When the supply exceeds the demand, then the great adjusting power of the balance will remedy the evil, and either that description of writing will altogether disappear, or the new additions to it be wrought with such ability as to ensure them a steady and merited reputation.

In Kelly's memoirs and these volumes, we have an illustration of the foregoing remarks. Kelly revived in our times the dramatic autobiography which has been dormant in English literature, I

believe, since the work of George Anne Bellamy. His book, which though full of "trifles light as air," is an amusing ephemera, has opened the way for a variety of others actually published or ready for the press, upon the same model, so that until the inevitable glut arrives, it may be expected that no one connected with the stage, from the dramatist to the candle-snuffer, will fail to bring his wares to market—*undique collatis membris*. Recollections and invention will be both in busy requisition during the interim.

A new figure of speech has been recently added to those previously accredited, and that under a parliamentary sanction—the *figure of rigmarole*. If it be used, as I suppose it is, to denote a style of rambling and incongruous buffoonery, it has come into recognition must opportunely to characterize Mr. Reynolds's book, which is, from beginning to end, a piece of disjointed burlesque—outrageous marvels and practical *jokery*. Nothing indeed can equal his love of a practical joke—an upset from a gig, or a drunken tumble under the table, are described with most edifying minuteness and the recital followed by quite an *O Plaudite* smirk of self-complacency; an unseemly rent or any uncouthness in the dress or external man is seized upon with the avidity of a professed caricaturist, and in short in the extravagantly ludicrous he *lives, moves and has his being*.

The early part of these memoirs is not only the best, but almost positively good. Indeed I have invariably remarked that all autobiographers succeed best in the account of their childhood and youth. The reason, I think, is not difficult of discovery. It is a period so far removed from that at which it is reviewed, that the besetting consciousness of identity is much lessened, and all the warpings of self-love nearly obviated. Thus no one in after-life objects to raise, or join in a laugh at the expense of himself in his adolescence, and thus it is that the transactions of that age are related with frankness and impartiality. Not to omit that the retrospect of those scenes of either positive enjoyment or ludicrous distress, imparts a gaiety to the mind that extends itself to the narrative*.

In these volumes, the whole account of the author's inauguration at Westminster school is very laughable, and equally so are many of the anecdotes of his childish contemporaries, from Lord William Russell, who by a whimsical brevet was to become Lord John

* Rousseau's *Confessions* may be appealed to in corroboration of these remarks.

when the latter should be Duke of Bedford, to the choleric young Taffy, whose first use of his restored faculties when he was cut down from hanging, was to aim a box at his officious preserver.

Farce, broad farce, continues still to be the staple of Mr. Reynolds's literary commodities. From that, whether within its legitimate limit of two acts or extended to five, has he hitherto derived the *means whereby he lived*, and from that, dilated into a "time of representation" nearly reaching seventy years, does he promise himself to continue them.

With all his faults he seems to be a merry, good-natured old fellow, so I wish him success.

From a book of this nature it is obviously impracticable to make any extract.

REJECTED ARTICLES.

March 10, 1827.

THIS professes to be a collection of specimens by several popular writers excluded from a work called, "The spirits of the age." Elia, Cobbett, Professor W—(Wilson I presume) Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and, I believe, another are the contributors real or pretended to the volume. I am not at all able to decide whether these compositions are genuine or not. Elia's narrative of an excursion to Calais savours a good deal of burlesque, and the anatomical exhibition of Hazlitt's mind might appear a little ultra to any one who did not know the extravagance of his authenticated productions; but Cobbett and Leigh Hunt are not in the least heightened. In "Rich and Poor," the article ascribed to the former, is a passage in that high spirit of poetry clothed in the garb of homely prose, which so often delights one in the midst of the scurrility with which it is encompassed in his works; and the story of Boccaccio and Fiametta, ascribed to Hunt, is one of great beauty and perfect seriousness. If this book be indeed, as its title so like that of "the Rejected Addresses" would seem to indicate, an imitation, what I have stated might seem on a superficial view to convey high eulogy; but I do not think it does. The object of mimicry, whether

of habits of mind or of person, is to create laughter by exhibiting a resemblance at once striking and ludicrous. Its most instructive end, when applied to mental peculiarities, (the only ones it can be applied to without degenerating into buffoonery,) is to give a strong development to all those points in an author's style which characterize and mark it with individuality, but which are more easily felt than detected. When, instead of this, a mere inanimate likeness is presented, inferior to the original in his best appearance and equally superior to his worst, there is nothing either to excite our admiration at the artist's skill, or to make us better acquainted with his subject.

The passage I extract is the termination of an analysis of the play of *Romeo and Juliet*, under the name of Professor W., containing, whoever be its author, a just crimination of the liberties taken in the acted plays of Shakespeare with the original text.

"Permit me, my dear friend, before closing this inordinately long letter, to warn you (though I feel assured that the warning is superfluous) against judging of what I have now said of this sweetest, gentlest and most perfect of all Shakespeare's productions, in the presence of any of those impressions which you may have received from witnessing the *acted* play. And this warning is particularly necessary (if at all) in connexion with the latter part of my remarks. I have there supposed * requires some one idea or image to balance that exuberant spirit of life which everywhere pervades it, and that, therefore, Shakespeare has introduced the one alluded to. Need I add, then, that I speak of *Shakespeare's* drama, *not* of that which has been polluted by the impudent interpolations of the players? Heaven knows, the general impression left by the catastrophe of this latter, when represented, as we have seen it, by consummate actors, is enough to embitter a whole after-life, and half blight the recollections of the past, however bright they may have been! Assuredly, *that* is enough to counterbalance a thousand fold all the buoyancy that has gone before it, even though the "overwhelming brows," and haggard and famine-stricken visage of the poor Apothecary, were to be transformed, by the same kind of playhouse magic, into the sparkling eyes and rubicund cheeks of some fat

* *Hiatus valdè defendus.*

and contented friar : which transformation, by the bye, would be quite as natural and necessary to the consistency of the work.

“No—never did I see an essential change made in any of Shakespeare's dramas that was not infinitely for the worse ; and *this* is infinitely the worst of all. So that you will not wonder if I am a little anxious that you should not inadvertently try anything I have said of Romeo and Juliet, by the impressions received from the version of it—which absolutely destroys the very essence of its character, and changes it, so far as regards the catastrophe, from a perfect drama of the very highest class, into a paltry *melo-drama* of the very lowest.”

P. 138-9.

TONE'S MEMOIRS.

March. 20, 1827.

I CONSIDER this to be a work of great and uncommon interest. The character of its hero, the important transactions of which he was the promoter, and the uncommon ability with which both subjects are treated, can scarcely fail to engage every variety of reader. To the Irish Catholic, the memoirs of Tone exhibit a still more powerful attraction ; and if properly considered, may be employed by him as a most salutary guide in those conjunctures of difficulty and danger, of which it requires little political forecast to anticipate the probable and speedy occurrence. One political fact I take to be clearly established by this publication—namely, that Ireland can never be an independent country : that while England retains the dominion of the seas, we must be always subject to her sway, and that her downfall would only have the effect of assigning us over to the victor. Tone's opinion was directly the reverse of this, and he exhausts the whole force of his great cleverness in supporting his view—feeling that it was the cardinal point for him to establish, in order to ensure the co-operation of the Irish people with the French invaders. I think the total failure of all his reasonings, ingenious as they are, to effect a moment's conviction, or to make us forget that we are listening merely to the sanguine

speculations of an enthusiast, are sufficient, without the array of any deep-sought arguments on the other side, to set the question at rest. He observes himself very justly, that a defeated insurrection always strengthens the hands of government; in like manner, an unsuccessful attack upon received opinions has always the effect of corroborating them. It follows therefore, that in the event of an invasion of Ireland being effected while the catholics are kept in a state of alienation from the British constitution, the course for them to adopt is one of the strictest neutrality, as far as it can be maintained. They are too weak a body not to be at the mercy of the conqueror, whoever that might be, and it would be but common prudence to have as few delinquencies in the eyes of that conqueror to expiate, as the circumstances would permit. Tone's great errors in planning the separation of these countries seem to have been : 1. Reckoning on the militia joining the people — this was a convicted error. 2. Relying on a cordial union of Catholics and Presbyterians (the Catholics being then notoriously divided among themselves). 3. The expectation of gaining the Irish sailors in the British fleet. A miscarriage on any one of these points would have been fatal to the whole enterprise, and I believe every cool-minded person is convinced that a miscarriage would certainly have ensued upon all of them.

It is time however to give something like a sketch of the principal events of Tone's short career.

Theobald Wolfe Tone was born in Dublin in June 1763, and entered College about the usual age. During a very idle, mis-spent academic career, he fell in love with a Miss Witherington, to whom he was soon after clandestinely married. The necessity of providing for a family soon became imminent, and having chosen the profession of the law, and gone through the routine of manducatory preparation at the Middle Temple, he was called to the Irish bar in Trinity Term 1789. His professional prospects were eminently auspicious, though marred by an invincible repugnance to the study of the law and the consciousness of inefficiency consequent upon that repugnance. However the employment of his talents merely in a manner congenial to his tastes would have led him to great eminence at the bar, so close a connexion subsisted in those times between politics and that profession. What he might have achieved appears manifest from his defence of the whig club, in 1790, having at once opened an acquaintance with Mr. George Ponsonby, which was im-

mediately followed by a retainer upon an election inquiry, and the acquisition of 80 guineas by that single transaction. The high spirit of Tone however refused to submit to the cold aristocratical superiority assumed over him by the whig party, and he at once and for ever broke off all political connexion with them. His next composition was a pamphlet recommendatory of a neutral policy by Ireland in the rupture which then, (1790) threatened between England and Spain, and soon after appeared his *Argument in favour of the Catholics*. This pamphlet gained him an election as honorary member of the Belfast volunteer association in 1791, and the office of extending its principles in Dublin—an office which he undertook and executed with all the ardour of his temperament. To this pamphlet also he was primarily indebted for the situation of secretary to the Catholic convention as successor to Richard Burke, with a salary of 200 pounds a year, an appointment which he obtained in 1792 and continued to hold until the year 1793. During this period he acquitted himself with a fidelity most honourable to himself and useful to his employers. Shortly after his appointment to this last office, the qualified emancipation bill passed. His opposition to all compromise with government on this occasion was, like all his other measures, energetic and inflexible, but his arguments fail to produce conviction that the course adopted was not the wisest. The arrest of Jackson and implication of Tone to a certain extent, in his examination, rendered it necessary for the friends of the latter to make terms with the government, and in ratification of an agreement to that effect, he embarked with his family for America on the 20th of May 1793, landing about two months after at Philadelphia. He now seems to have abandoned politics for a time, and had nearly concluded for a farm to settle upon, in the new world, when accounts from Ireland rekindled his latent ardour, and encouraged by the French envoy at Philadelphia and by representations from home, he set sail for Havre on the 1st of January 1796. With Tone's arrival in Paris commences the paramount interest of the work. He became at once an active and powerful agent in machinating the change of the whole political world. In the account of his labours in this mission, we have one more instance, and perhaps on the whole it is the most remarkable instance on record, of the power of strong unswerving resolution, to overcome obstacles which to the timid or calculating must have appeared absolutely

insurmountable. Tone arrived at Paris without a single document to authenticate his mission, and hardly with the means of proving his identity; without an introduction to one powerful individual there, and knowing scarcely anything of the French language. Yet in less than a year (Dec. 1796), a fleet of 17 sail of the line and 13 frigates, containing 13,978 troops and 80,000 stand of arms, set sail from Brest at the sole instigation and through the almost unassisted perseverance of this one man. The fate of the Bantry Bay expedition is too well known to need particular detail. Hoche, the commander of the troops, was separated from the fleet, which arrived in Bantry Bay under the command of Grouchy. This latter commander did nothing except return to France without being encountered by the English fleet, and thus the winds, belying their reputed inconsistency, once again saved England; and thus Grouchy gave the first instance of the indecision he was afterwards said to have exhibited at Waterloo, and both times to the benefit of the same hostile nation. On Tone's return to France, he obtained a commission in the French army of the Sambre and Meuse, and was actively engaged in Holland in the second expedition formed against England by means of an invasion of Ireland. The fate of the Texel fleet, captured or destroyed by Lord St. Vincent, after having been cooped up by those winds which never deserted the English cause since the time of the Armada, is well known. Tone made another attempt in 1798, although in a state of utter despair as to the event. He was taken prisoner on board the *Hoche*, in Loch Swilly, off the coast of Donegal, in the last and most fatal enterprise for the conquest of this country—that under Hardy*. He was immediately conveyed to Dublin, sentenced by a court martial, and died by his own hand.

The succeeding portion of the work relates the history of his family and particularly of the Editor, up to the present time. Independently of their connexion with Tone, both his wife and son have sufficient intrinsic interest to engage our sympathies. The former obtained a pension from Napoleon, and the latter fought for him in the campaigns of 1813 and 14. His account of the battle of Leipzig, as indeed the whole of his contribution to the present work, does equal credit to his talents and worth. After the downfall of their patron, the Tones again returned to America.

* Rather Humbert, as Hardy was only sent to his assistance.

Mrs. Tone remarried with a Mr Wilson, the attached and zealous friend of her family from her widowhood forwards; and the Editor was united to the daughter of another remarkable refugee, William Sampson. It may be worth remark, that so late as 1819, the application of this family to return to Great Britain was refused by this government.

I extract a passage remarkably illustrative of Tone's amiable domestic character, and of the melancholy tenderness with which he dwells upon scenes of homely fireside happiness.

“ My wife's health continuing still delicate, she was ordered by her physician to bathe in the salt water. I hired, in consequence, a little box of a house on the sea side, at Irishtown, where we spent the summer of 1790. Russell and I were inseparable, and, as our discussions were mostly political, and our sentiments agreed exactly, we extended our views, and fortified each other in the opinions, to the propagation and establishment of which we have ever since been devoted. I recall with transport the happy days we spent together during that period; the delicious dinners, in the preparation of which my wife, Russell, and myself, were all engaged; the afternoon walks, the discussions we had, as we lay stretched on the grass. It was delightful! Sometimes Russell's venerable father, a veteran of near seventy, with the courage of a hero, the serenity of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint, used to visit our little mansion, and that day was a *fête*. My wife doated on the old man, and he loved her like one of his children. I will not attempt, because I am unable, to express the veneration and regard I had for him, and I am sure that, next to his own sons, and scarcely below them, he loved and esteemed me. Russell's brother, John, too, used to visit us, a man of a most warm and affectionate heart and, incontestably, of the most companionable talents I ever met. His humour, which was pure and natural, flowed in an inexhaustible stream. He had not the strength of character of my friend Tom, but for the charms of conversation he excelled him and all the world. Sometimes, too, my brother William used to join us for a week, from the County Kildare, where he resided with my brother Mathew, who had lately commenced a cotton manufactory at Prosperous in that county. I have already mentioned the convivial talents he possessed. In short,

when the two Russells, my brother and I, were assembled, it is impossible to conceive of a happier society. I know not whether our wit was perfectly classical or not, nor does it signify. If it was not sterling, at least it passed current amongst ourselves. If I may judge, we were none of us destitute of the humour indigenous to the soil of Ireland; for three of us I can answer, they possessed it in an eminent degree; add to this, I was the only one of the four who was not a poet, or at least a maker of verses: so that every day produced a ballad, or some poetical squib, which amused us after dinner, and, as our conversation turned upon no ribaldry or indecency, my wife and sister never left the table. These were delicious days. The rich and great, who sit down every day to the monotony of a splendid entertainment, can form no idea of the happiness of our frugal meal, nor of the infinite pleasure we found in taking each his part in the preparation and attendance. My wife was the centre and the soul of all. I scarcely know which of us loved her best; her courteous manners, her goodness of heart, her incomparable humour, her never failing cheerfulness, her affection for me and for our children, rendered her the object of our common admiration and delight. She loved Russell as well as I did. In short, a more interesting society of individuals, connected by purer motives, and animated by a more ardent attachment and friendship for each other, cannot be imagined."

Vol. 1. P. 33-36.

TALES OF A VOYAGER

TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

Feb. 27, 1827.

THESE volumes are divided into two portions, the first, which is the groundwork of the other, is entitled "the Voyage," and contains a relation of the *memorabilia* of a voyage to the Arctic ocean, either really, or supposed to be, strangely undertaken by a young London invalid for the recovery of his health, and performed in one of the trading whalers. The principal part of the work however,

and that for which the foregoing seems merely introduced as a vehicle, is a collection of tales supposed to be contributed by the superior officers on board the traveller's ship and those of some other whalers during their mutual visits while all were under blockade by the ice. The portion designated "the voyage," or that narrated by the invalid in the first person, is rather lengthy and tiresome. There is a perpetually reiterated description of the sea rolls with their effects of upsetting all the moveables; verifying the proverb of "the cup and the lip," and creating every species of confusion, which is not only monotonous, but to any sufferer from sea-sickness, sometimes quite nauseating. All the attempts at the ludicrous are also failures—the mirth is laboured and abortive, and there is an unsparing resort to that most deplorable succedaneum of sterling wit:—practical joking. After all, "the voyage" evinces some talent: the process of whale catching and preparing, is related with much vividness and perspicuity, and the account of some critical escapes from the collisions of ice bergs excites a very strong-interest.

It is the tales already mentioned to which however "the Arctic Voyager" will owe any great favour it may obtain. Some of them turn upon the Northern legendary superstitions and are wrought up to a pitch of great exciting power—others are more within the verge of probability and are conversant with occurrences of a mundane and familiar character. Of this class the "Valetudinarian" is by far the best: it is indeed written with a delicate humour and tact that render it exceedingly agreeable.

The following passage from the story last mentioned, gives an amusing picture of the salvos applied by vanity to the wounded self-love of a baffled intruder.

"Fraught with this praiseworthy resolution, I next day proceeded to the garden, and immediately discovered my young friend. I proceeded towards him with intent to oblige him to speak; but he was not to be obliged to do any thing. It was in vain that I walked up close to him; as if he penetrated my intention, he struck into another path, whenever I got near him, and even when I did succeed in so hedging him in that he could not possibly escape, he looked so plaguy cool, that he froze the words in my throat. In fact, he seemed now, as on all other occasions, surrounded by an impassable, though invisible barrier, which no one was permitted to overleap.

“ This line of conduct, in which he persisted for several days, produced another revolution in my opinion concerning him. The fellow is a fool, thought I—a mere automaton—a shallow dolt, who, under pretence of great gravity and abstraction, conceals his want of wit, and his ignorance of conversation; he is a living example of the observation, that gravity is a cloak for folly. And yet the fellow is not grave either—no, it must be that I look so grave—so—prudent—so—so—wise, that the boy is afraid of exposing his own weakness, by comparing it with my strength—Well, after all, this does not prove him a fool, though it shows his inexperience, for he ought to have discovered that the origin of my wish to converse with him was only my desire to instruct him.

” This opinion was so refreshing to my own vanity, that I felt my good will towards the stranger marvellously increased by it, and I became more than ever anxious to gain the confidence of one to whom I attributed so much penetration. ‘ This diffidence in our own capacity,’ thought I, ‘ is certainly an amiable quality—in youth—and hesitating to enter into conversation with me (I will not repeat the opinion I presumed the stranger had formed of me)—hesitating to enter into conversation with such a man, shows him to possess great modesty and no doubt many other virtues.’ ”

Vol. 3. P. 252-3.

FOUR YEARS RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.

March 28, 1827.

THE introductory part of this work, which is quite unconnected with its title, is all of it that is calculated to excite attention or observation. It consists of a short memoir of the author, a man most indisputably of a superior stamp, and an account of his conversion from the church of England to the Catholic faith. To the many evils which the political situation of the catholics in these countries creates, is to be opposed this one good growing out of these evils themselves—that there is not one of their converts of whom they have not cause to be more or less proud. The motives of all must be above all impeachment. Hence it is that our enemies are always reduced to impugn the intellects of our converts, and hence it is

that our triumph is complete indeed when our ranks are replenished by those from whom all shafts of this kind must recoil innocuously :

Telum imbelle et sine ictu.

I think therefore that the accession of such a man as the writer of these pages, should be very joyfully hailed by the catholic body at large. His writing proves him to be neither a zealot nor a visionary : on the contrary, the evidences of a cool, unbiassed and investigating character are to be traced in every sentiment. He is besides a person of liberal education and of good disposition ; I should add, from the compression and pregnancy of his style, a practised thinker and writer also. The material questions at issue between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants are stated, balanced, and decided upon in the compass of a few pages, with a clearness, completeness, and impartiality, which leave nothing to desire.

The ‘ Residence ’ has nothing beyond its character of good sense and judicious observation upon practical matters, to recommend it. It is prolonged by an account of a fever and the consequent death of the writer’s eldest son, which, though written with much piety and tenderness, fails to interest a reader unacquainted with any of the parties. A man of less shrewdness than this author should have too early discovered how tedious the relation of matters of a merely personal nature are to our best friends, to have ventured upon an infliction of this kind on the public in general.

I extract some of the arguments for the real presence, founded on tradition :

“ The apostles then, according to Nicole, understood in what sense Christ spoke the words, ‘ This is my body,’ etc., and taught that sense to the first Christians, and the same sense was delivered to succeeding ages. But, if this were the figurative sense, all the Christian world must, at some time, have gone to sleep in the belief of the figurative sense, and awaked in the belief of the literal. The change, if there was one, was effected without the least disturbance, nobody knows how ; and this, not in a question of abstract doctrine, but in one which included the adoration of *latria*, or the divine honour paid to the consecrated elements, in which worship every individual Christian was interested.

“ Arnaud, in the *Perpétuité*, proves, century by century, that the real presence and transubstantiation were believed, not only by the catholic church, but by the Greeks, after their schism as well as before, and by other communions separated from catholic unity. At this distance of time I cannot do justice, nor could I at any time have done justice, by any summary of mine, to the force and ability with which these two authors conduct the argument. To them I must refer the well-disposed, the impartial, the disinterested, the honest inquirer.

“ The French theologians justly hold the first rank amongst all those of the Christian world. I was now to become acquainted with him who may take his place among the fathers of the church,—the great Bossuet.

“ The church now re-entered on that claim to infallibility which it had lost with me by the supposed mistake touching the Eucharist. The book of ‘*Les variations des Églises Protestantes*’ showed that the Protestants, by their own admission, had no claim to this privilege, since they were continually changing and contradicting themselves, asserting, however, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the enunciation of dogmas and formulas, which subsequent inspirations correct and amend.

“ ‘*La réforme n’a jamais raison la première fois.*’ How sharp, how cutting, how penetrating, how conclusive is this sarcasm !

“ That book or section of the ‘*Variations*’ which treats of ‘the Church,’ ought to be published as a separate tract. I recommend a translation of it to the pious and zealous catholic clergy of England; it would be a *good work*; no men know better than they in what sense I use the words.”

P. 48, 49, 50.

ALMACK'S.

April 6, 1827.

THIS froth upon the literary surface is best described by negatives—it has no story, no incidents, no unity, and contains, I will venture to assert, no correct portraiture of fashionable manners, although it is from the contrary supposition that its small glimmer

of reputation is supplied. In Almack's the characters are all moulded out of hard and strongly contrasted materials : the effect of intercourse with the higher orders, is, on the contrary, to smooth down all the angular asperities that give distinctness and prominence to individual character, and to leave only those peculiarities of deeply imprinted nature that do not display themselves except upon rare and unguarded occasions. In Almack's all the fashionables are bustling, fidgetty and aspiring. Persons of established rank, on the contrary, from the consciousness that their station is ascertained, and that their title to a position close to the vertex of the social pyramid is admitted and indisputable, maintain their ground with a remarkably tranquil, and unconstrained deportment : it is only the strugglers from the lower to the more exalted grades that fret and toil in their ascent, and I think it is the great ignorance of this distinction manifested in the present novel, that marks its author to be certainly not a person of caste, and at best only admitted on sufferance by those who are such. The dialogue of Almack's too (and it consists of scarcely anything else,) is of a very inferior order—flippancy for wit, and pertness for epigram, are the counterfeits it passes off : and such as it is, it is furthermore not original : there were two novels came out about twelve or fourteen years ago, and which made a good deal of noise at the time—" Sketches of Character," and "Varieties of Life," of a precisely similar construction, but executed, as far as I remember, with much more cleverness and brilliancy.

I select an excerpt almost at hap-hazard : it is part of a description of a dinner-party.

"The company, for a wonder, were slightly acquainted; for Lady Birmingham's dinners were in general composed of the odds and ends of fashionable society : which made the witty Colonel Leach once observe, that he supposed all their dining people's tickets were put into a bag, and that, when they wanted to give a feed, the butler drew out a certain number of names, and sent the invitation cards round. Lady Birmingham had also for several years maintained as her opinion, that provided you had a man cook, his being good or bad was of no consequence; the appetites of the world being, like their other senses, under the dominion of humbug; in the same manner in which every speech that comes from the mouth of a very great man is sure to be accounted witty. However, *peu-*

à-peu, her ladyship had discovered, that there were yet a few people left, who could discriminate between pretence and reality; and therefore, now that Barbara was come out, and was to be presented at Court, she determined that all about her should be positively striking. So, having heard that the Duke of Stavordale was parting with the celebrated M. Rissole, on account of his unheard of extravagance, Lady Birmingham immediately engaged this first of *cordons bleus*, which enabled her to boast that she gave her *chef de cuisine* higher wages than was paid to any cook in London, and that, moreover, he had consumed thirty-six partridges to make one *consommé*!! The reputation of Mr. Rissole, however, did wonders; for people were beginning to tire a little of the wealth and dulness of the Birminghams, but a first rate French cook no one can tire of. Besides, all the world of fashion wanted to see the interior of the warehouse, that they might be enabled to take a peep at the cabinet curiosity, as they designated Barbara, and most that saw her once, wished to see her again, etc. etc."

V. 3. P. 47, 48, 49.

L'HERMITE DE LA CHAUSSÉE D'ANTIN.

March 31, 1827.

MY observations upon this miscellany have been delayed beyond example for the apparently whimsical reason of having finished it without my knowledge. This however constitutes no charge either against the writer or reader, as the work is written in annals. Had I undertaken the criticism while the matter was fresher upon my mind, my reviewal would have been more diffuse, more discriminate and better digested; but would have contained the same unqualified approval I have now to record. "*L'Hermite*" is one of those rare works wherein realities are most skilfully ingrafted on fictitious stocks. The impersonations and incidents are all of the latter kind, while the scenes described are actual existences at Paris, enlivened by animated, agreeable, and instructive groups, exhibiting fresh and brilliant pictures of all the classifications into which the

society of that little world is subdivided. The *salon* of the lady of rank ; the tea garden of the citizen ; the habits and mode of life of the courtier, and of the student of the university, are scrutinized with equal minuteness, and the vices and foibles incident to each satirised with masterly power. " L'Hermite " reminds one occasionally of the " Spectator. " Like that celebrated series, it is conversant with the manners and pursuits of a great city. Like the " Spectator, " again, this writer assumes a character which he supports with admirable consistency throughout, and still like his English prototype he effuses his observations in a style perspicuous, fluent and unaffected. The French work is however less critical, but more descriptive than ours ; and for its excellence as a book of topographical detail, for its admirable insight into the diversities of character as affected by extrinsic circumstances, for its purity of style and variety of select colloquial language, I think it merits the first place among the useful perusals of a foreigner previous to his making a visit to Paris.

I cite some observations on the practice of duelling, with which the 77th paper commences.

" Un M. de Bréant, ancien militaire, déclamaît habituellement contre la fureur des duels : quelqu'un s'avisait, pour savoir à quoi s'en tenir sur sa philosophie, de lui annoncer un jour que son fils venait de recevoir une insulte grave dont il avait eu le *courage* de ne point demander raison. M. de Bréant donna sur-le-champ un démenti formel à celui qui avait fabriqué cette histoire, et l'on eut toutes les peines du monde à l'empêcher de se battre avec lui. Cette inconséquence, dont je pourrais citer des exemples plus récents, est le résultat nécessaire du peu d'accord qui existe sur ce point entre les mœurs, la morale et les institutions. De tous les préjugés maintenant en opposition directe avec les lois établies, le point d'honneur est peut-être le plus ancien, et, j'ai peur de le dire, le plus indestructible, parce qu'il s'est en quelque sorte identifié avec le caractère national. Qu'importe en effet chez une nation guerrière, où l'éducation fait un crime de la lâcheté et un supplice affreux du mépris, que la loi défende, sous peine de la vie même, ce que l'honneur commande sous peine de la honte ? A Dieu ne plaise que je veuille m'établir l'apologiste d'une coutume barbare, d'un *préjugé féroce qui met toutes les vertus à la pointe de l'épée* ; mais en lui

laissant tous les noms odieux dont les moralistes ont essayé de le flétrir, je suis d'avis que, dans l'état actuel de notre civilisation, il est bien plus aisé d'en attaquer le principe que d'en éviter les conséquences; on doit sur ce point penser comme Rousseau, sauf à agir, dans l'occasion, comme M. de Bréant. Avouons encore que, quelque blâmable que soit l'usage du duel, il trouve une sorte d'excuse dans la délicatesse des sentiments qu'il suppose, un prétexte dans la décence et la politesse qu'il maintient dans la société, et un complice puissant dans l'opinion publique qui le soustrait à l'action des lois."

Tom. 3. P. 243-4-5.

SIR J. BARRINGTON'S
PERSONAL SKETCHES.

(TWO FIRST VOLUMES.)

May 30, 1827.

THIS book will meet at once with more decided censure and more liberal allowance in the author's own country than elsewhere. In the important particular of veracity, his claims will be suspiciously admitted by any reader; for although in most men's lives there arise insulated incidents of a very surprising nature, yet when these come in an uninterrupted tissue, and when the same Munchausen like adventures are ascribed to a long line of persons from whom the writer derives his lineage, one is apt to shake the head and exclaim,

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

Unfortunately, Sir Jonah is within the ken of a number of surviving contemporaries or their immediate successors, by whom these suspicions are converted into certainties, and the charge of reckless, unblushing mendacity becomes fully sustained against this

hearty old gentleman. It is in Ireland however that this fault, together with the others which may be alleged against this book, will be admitted with their greatest palliation, and the errors of the author himself, with their consequences, receive the largest share of sympathy. Here he lives fresh in the recollection of many, as one of the most entertaining companions of an epoch the most exuberant in men of social talents : here his generous hospitality is still remembered by many, and his misfortunes, its inevitable sequel, felt and pitied.

To those who know the difficulties of writing up to the standard of a man's own faculties—what a union of good health, good spirits and exemption from care is requisite to admit their fair exercise, it will be much more a matter of admiration that under his present circumstances, old, in exile, and suffering under the most harassing pressure of pecuniary difficulties, Sir J. B. should have been at all able to lucubrate a readable book, than a subject of censure, that such book should be very decidedly inferior to what his former literary reputation gave promise of.

That the Historic or Personal Sketches are a work very markedly below par, is a lamentable fact. They are full of stories about people whom no one knows or cares for, and although all the great names of Ireland's proud day figure in the index and in the titles of the chapters, yet they are mere reading-traps and there is scarcely anything new or entertaining told respecting any one of them. Sir Jonah manifestly writes to get money, and if with we part him without very high respect or admiration, we do so with sufficient good will, very heartily to wish him success.

My sentiments on the "Personal Sketches" must be taken as a *Valeant quantum*, as the book has been a long while out of my hands.

HIGHWAYS AND BYE-WAYS.

Sept. 22, 1827.

MR. GRATTAN, who is, I believe, all but the avowed author of this book, is one of that numerous class whom the success of Mr. Irving has incited to authorship on the same plan; and of all the candidates for a share in those laurels from which Mr. Irving's chaplet has been weaved, Mr. Grattan asserts the best grounded claim, as far as my experience of the pretensions of his competitors extends.

Besides the impulse which success gives to imitation, in all the departments of literature, an additional reason why Irving should have stimulated an unusually great number of copyists, exists in the great imitability of his more obvious peculiarities. The same cause is to be assigned for the swarm of Brummagem Popes, Johnsons and Sternes that overran the literature of the last century, and who gave something very like the colour and impress of the sterling coin to metal altogether base and valueless. Mr. Irving is a writer almost exclusively of observation;—a term which I mean to restrict to its application to the surface of objects. He seizes with equal rapidity and justness, as well the striking combinations of external nature, as the prominent features of the human character. From a gentleness of disposition, and a seeming sympathy with the enjoyments and happiness of others, this power of observation has been much limited and appears in his writings directed to the delineation of the beautiful and tranquillising, rather than to the sublime and awful, in the landscape; and to the harmless eccentricities and amiable foibles, rather than the soul-stirring passions of man. There is scarcely anything of reflection or abstraction in his writings. He meddles only with effects, and leaves their causes to others. He knows well that his finely executed cabinet pieces in the Flemish style, must always please, and that his humorous portraitures of our own species must always amuse, and this satisfies him. He seems to regard the surface of things merely, and that in its most obvious effect; hence, though he represents the agency of one passion or propensity with surpassing skill, he never once exhibits the

“mingled yarn” whereof the human heart is composed, nor develops any one of the latent springs by which that machine is actuated. Hence, perhaps, mainly, arises Mr. Irving’s inferiority to Sir Walter Scott, and hence is it that I think his manner of writing so especially open to imitation.

Mr. Grattan’s tales are rather estimable for style than for pure sentiment. The language is correct, apposite and in agreeable cadence: the descriptions, animated and graphical; but the incidents are too few and commonplace, and his characters too little developed; and being rather the result or creatures, than the originators of the circumstances in which they move, they are chargeable with the same commonplace. Mr. Grattan’s writing may be aptly compared to a modern dramatic spectacle. The scenery is well painted; the costume correct; the fêtes and dances incidental to the piece, graceful and well got-up; but the dialogue does not rise above mediocrity, nor is any sympathy excited in the hackneyed adventures and overstrained language of the *dramatis personæ*, to whose agency the development of a very inartificial plot is intrusted.

I think the story of “La Vilaine Tête,” so much the best of the whole collection, very confirmatory of my sentiments respecting Mr. Grattan. Of this story the incidents, and, (*mutatis nominibus*) the persons, are all supplied by Madame de la Roche Jacquelin, and to Mr. Grattan was left only the accessory part, to which it would be invidious to deny his competence to render full justice.

The following exordium to a short sketchy thing called the “Birth of Henry IV.” affords as good an average of his composition, perhaps, as any other :

“There is not in nature a finer spectacle than a distant chain of mountains covered with snow, and glistening in the sun. It is impossible to describe this appearance, nor is it easy to define the sensations it produces on the mind. The object has in it something loftier than beauty, and possesses a softened sublimity totally unassociated with fear. Unlike other vast works of nature, it does not speak to our apprehensions, nor does it, like those of art, bring humiliating notions of imperfection and decay : but stretching far away along the horizon, in celestial splendour of colouring, it looks like the boundary of the world, and might be believed a fitting resting place between earth and heaven.”

P. 279.

MEMOIRS
OF M^{ME} DE LA ROCHE JACQUELEIN.

Aug. 13, 1827.

WOMEN possess naturally a great proportion of those faculties which constitute the perfection of a narrator. They have sensibility, observation and tact, and generally the power of expressing themselves in copious and well-chosen language. Unfortunately however, vanity, through its progeny—affectedness and egotism, most commonly obtrudes itself to mar the effects which such powers might be expected to produce. A lady is almost always her own heroine; the centre of a system around which all other bodies perform their orbits with derivative and tributary lustre. From all this sort of imperfection, Madame de La Roche Jacquelein is as remarkably free, as she is possessed in an equally eminent degree of all the qualifications which I have supposed it to mar. She seldom speaks of herself dissociated from the common cause, and when she does, it is manifestly not for the indulgence of vanity, but to illustrate some general position. Her narrative is a plain, unvarnished tale, deriving its great charm from the confidence which we repose in the simplicity and artlessness of her character. One clap-trap, one strain at artificial eloquence would have destroyed all our prepossessions. We should have become guarded and suspicious, had our feelings been so attacked; but from this, Madame de La Roche Jacquelein's judgment and good taste ensure her absolute forbearance. Confiding in the power of her incidents to excite the deepest sympathy, she leaves them quite unadorned, to find the way to our hearts by their own inherent pathos. The achievements of Henri de La Roche Jacquelein and his companions, themes which the epic poet might select with advantage, are told in that tone of subdued enthusiasm which shows indeed how acutely the writer felt them; but she takes no pains by any attempted amplification or embellishment to carry the reader's suffrages one step farther than they would go of themselves. The happy primitive state of society

and manners in la Vendée, so beautifully, because so naturally described, is delightful from the same pervading consciousness we feel that the representation is an exact and unexaggerated transcript of the reality. There is no formal tribute of praise paid to the gentry whose conduct towards the peasantry was marked by a paternity unknown elsewhere, nor anything more encomiastic of these latter, who requited their superiors with an equally unexampled devotedness, than a temperate, but not a cold, attestation to their general fidelity and good conduct.

By such means has M^{me} de la R. J. composed a work which besides immortalizing her own worth and talent, will transmit to future times the events of a war, unknown at its inception; unheard of out of France, until she gave it interest; and utterly fruitless in its consequences. With so little apparent design or tendency to that effect, has an accession been made to modern history, more calculated to engender detestation of the latter incidents of the French revolution, and attachment to the system which that mighty convulsion destroyed, than any other that can be named. The Vendean insurrection was provoked by a general conscription and the intrusion of the constitutional priests. There appears to have been nothing organized or political at its commencement, which may be dated at a short time before the death of Louis XVI. The war terminated with the capture of the general in chief, Charette, in 1795.

SECRET MEMOIRS

OF THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV.

Sept. 8, 1827.

THE modern practice of ransacking the cabinets of remarkable deceased persons, and exhibiting to the public eye all of their contents which might appear likely to amuse public curiosity, without regard to any other consideration, has thrown upon the compilers of the day an awfully large share of responsibility for the propriety of whatever they thus disseminate. It is true that the person who addresses even to his most intimate correspondent,

that which, from its indecency and scandal, is utterly unfit to meet the public view, must be heavily chargeable with the faults of his offspring, whatever the fate of that offspring may subsequently be : but unquestionably the original intention that the evil should not be diffused, removes the heaviest blame from the writer, by shifting it to the publisher.

Bearing this palliation in mind, and making allowance for the extraordinary openness with which persons of naturally frank temper like the Duchess of Orleans, seek to indemnify themselves in private for the constraint they suffer from in public, the reader feels no great remorse at allowing himself to be amused at her most extraordinary details, and takes leave of herself without one angry or even disgustful sentiment at the disregard of all female delicacy with which these details are communicated. Fortified by an unblemished character for chastity, and by the temperance of her own habits, she deals out charges of profligacy and drunkenness against almost every one of the court ladies with the most unsparing profusion, and those against whom the crimination stops here may deem themselves fortunate in their escape. Madame de Maintenon, besides the other imputed traits of hypocrisy and lying, is throughout treated as a systematic assassin, and according to Madame d'Orleans, St. Francis de Sales himself was a habitual cheat at play, and could only allege in his defence that he converted the fruits of his speculation to the use of the poor.

This does all very well for the light and thoughtless reader who looks not beyond the amusement of the moment. But the reflecting mind will consider this work in a graver light. It will perceive in it the strongest, because the most unintentional confirmation of all the accredited commonplaces against courts; the vanities and vexations of spirit which they engender, and their blighting power over all the better qualities of character. The Duchess of Orleans, with an uncommon portion of natural candour, and a temper which seems to have been none of the most controllable, was able soon after her transplantation to France, to wear the hypocritical mask which formed part of the court costume, with as much ease as the most thorough-paced parasite of them all. She visited and embraced Madame de Maintenon at the very time she was speculating upon the chances of her attempting to carry off herself, I believe, (certainly, her son,) by poison, and she is on no less amiable terms

with the strumpets and drunkards of the one sex, and the rogues and——of the other, upon whose practices she so overtly expatiates. Thus to a mind not totally debased, is the splendour and external enjoyment of a court bitterly atoned for by the sacrifice of all honourable principle with which alone it seems to be purchaseable.

I do not mean to express any opinions upon her Royal Highness's powers of composition, as I read her book in a very inelegant translation, which however cannot be called a *bad* one, as I understand it has the merit of suppressing all the most revolting obscenities of the original.

I select a part of the account of the celebrated financial impostor Law for an extract.

“ Mr. Law is a very honest and a very sensible man; he is extremely polite to every body, and very well bred. He does not speak French ill, at least he speaks it much better than Englishmen in general. It is said, that when his brother arrived in Paris, Mr. Law made him a present of three millions (of livres). He has good talents, and has put the affairs of the state in such good order, that all the King's debts have been paid. He is admirably skilled in all that relates to finance. The late King would have been glad to employ him; but, as Mr. Law was not a catholic, he said he ought not to confide in him. (19th Sept. 1719.)

“ He (Law) says, that of all the persons to whom he has explained his system, there have been only two who have properly comprehended it; and these are the King of Sicily and my son; he was quite astonished at their having so readily understood it. He is so much run after, that he has no repose by day or by night. A Duchess even kissed his hand publicly. If a Duchess can do this, what will not other ladies do ? ****

“ Another lady who pursued him every where, heard that he was at Madame de Simiane's, and immediately begged the latter to permit her to dine with her. Madame de Simiane went to her and said she must be excused for that day, as Mr. Law was to dine with her. Madame de Boucha replied, that it was for this reason expressly she wished to be invited. Madame de Simiane only repeated that she did not wish to have Mr. Law troubled, and so quitted her. Having, however, ascertained the dinner hour, Madame de Boucha passed

before the house in her coach, and made her coachman and footmen call out 'Fire!' Immediately all the company quitted the table to know where the fire was, and among them Mr. Law appeared. As soon as Madame de Boucha saw him, she jumped out of her carriage to speak to him; but he, guessing the trick, instantly disappeared.

"Another lady ordered her carriage to be driven opposite to Mr. Law's hotel, and then to be overturned. Addressing herself to the coachman, she said, 'Overturn here, you blockhead!—overturn!' Mr. Law ran out to her assistance, when she confessed to him that she had done this for the sole purpose of having an interview with him."

P. 341-2-3.

SCOTT'S LIFE OF NAPOLEON.

Oct. 25, 1827.

THE faults charged against this work by a large portion of its censurers, however well founded they may be, imply the highest attestation to the author's powers. He has not conquered impossibilities, and therefore, they say, he has failed. The censure of another party of cavillers is praise to the book itself, as it is only censure for wanting that which the author rather boastfully declares it should want; when he says he has not rummaged into any repository of scandal to bring to light stories resting on no better foundation than the gossip of the day: stories whose revival would serve only the purpose of staving the ravening appetite so generally felt for secret history, without illustrating any fact or confirming any theory in the author's design to advance.

If however it be merit of a high order to detail succinctly and perspicuously, the transactions of so confused a period of history as that occupied by the French Revolution; to have clearly contradistinguished its various parties however minute their essential shades of difference, and to have powerfully and dramatically individualised characters possessing in common the features of blood-thirstiness, turpitude and atheism—if it be the mark of an imaginative and vivid

mind to describe battles and sieges with so graphical a power as to make us comprehend easily the whole mechanism of the manœuvres and the topography of the scenes on which they were transacted ; if the soundest maxims of the statesman and moralist are expressed in the most flowing and graceful diction of the orator and the poet ; if the whole work be pervaded by a tone of the most dispassionate fairness and candour, then I think it must be allowed that a book comprising such merits *cannot* be a failure ; that without any indulgence for difficulties to be overcome, it may be maintained that Sir Walter Scott has not formed an over-estimate of his powers in entering this new field of literary competition, and that although he may not eclipse Hume and Robertson, he has yet surmounted difficulties which even they might find formidable, and with which no contemporary writer dare even venture to grapple. A few of these may be hastily enumerated.

The first and most striking is the previous judgments formed by mankind universally upon the character of Bonaparte ; judgments which the exploits of that amazing personage went well nigh to divest of their extravagance. With his admirers he was a god, with his enemies a demon. The historian had at once to undeify him and to include him within the variegated fold of humanity. This was to apply a damper to both parties which the highly excited temperament of humanity always feels to be disappointing and painful. In narrating the events of a war waged with such unmitigable fury, and in which both parties alternately tasted of the intoxicating cup of almost miraculous success, many errors were to be charged against the conduct of each, which must sorely gall national pride, and those errors have not been concealed, though perhaps, with a scarcely culpable bias, they may have been somewhat softened on the side of the author's country. The last impediment to success I shall mention is that occasioned by Scott's former habits of writing. When has a poet ever been found an able expositor of historical truth, or the man of highly tempered fancy enabled to sober his mind down to the representation of simple facts ? Yet Scott is judged as if that strange paradox of Johnson, that Milton might have been Newton and Newton Milton, were an established and incontrovertible truth.

After all, I am not the unqualified admirer of Scott's Napoleon, either for its style or its sentiment. The first is faulty in many

respects, and throughout unequal. Sometimes swelling into bombast, and sometimes sinking into the tame flatness of a state paper. The sentiments are occasionally wire-drawn, and sometimes reiterated with an identity of thought and expression almost ludicrous. The book is thus much too long and seems, indeed, to have wearied its author into an unrevised and hasty publication. The observation of Queen Anne's chaplain * would have certainly been exemplified by Sir Walter had he used less precipitancy. His book would have been shorter and better.

But, notwithstanding these and perhaps a few more reservations, I am of opinion that posterity, who will form the only competent tribunal, will pronounce the "memoirs of Napoleon" to be a valuable accession to historical literature : that if not free from faults, they are greatly outweighed by merits, above all by the merit of impartiality; and that those who have learned the events related piecemeal and desultorily, will find by it their previous information methodised, corrected and enlarged.

The passage I extract is the characters of the sanguinary triumvirate, Robespierre, Danton and Marat.

"Vanity was Robespierre's ruling passion, and though his countenance was the image of his mind, he was vain even of his personal appearance, and never adopted the external habits of a sans-culotte. Amongst his fellow jacobins, he was distinguished by the nicety with which his hair was powdered, and the neatness of his dress was carefully attended to, so as to counterbalance, if possible, the vulgarity of his person. His apartments, though small, were elegant, and vanity had filled them with representations of the occupant. Robespierre's picture at length being in one place, his miniature in another, his bust occupied a niche, and on the table were dispersed a few medallions exhibiting his head in profile. The vanity which all this indicates was of the coldest and most selfish character, such as considers neglect as insult, and receives homage merely as a tribute; so that, while praise is received without gratitude, it is withheld at the risk of mortal hate. Self-love of this dangerous character is closely allied with envy, and Robespierre was one of the most envious and vindictive men that ever lived. He never was

* Archbishop Secker.

known to pardon any opposition, affront or even rivalry; and to be marked in his tablets on such an account was a sure, though perhaps not an immediate sentence of death. Danton was a hero compared with this cold, calculating, creeping miscreant; for his passions, though exaggerated, had at least some touch of humanity, and his brutal ferocity was supported by brutal courage. Robespierre was a coward who signed death-warrants with a hand that shook, though his heart was relentless. He possessed no passions on which to charge his crimes; they were perpetrated in cold blood and upon mature deliberation.

“Marat, the third of this infernal triumvirate, had attracted the attention of the lower orders by the violence of his sentiments in the *Journal* which he conducted from the commencement of the Revolution, upon such principles that it took the lead in forwarding its successive changes. His political exhortations began and ended like the howl of a blood-hound, for murder; or if a wolf could have written a journal, the gaunt and famished wretch could not have ravened more eagerly for slaughter. It was blood which was Marat's constant demand; not in drops from the breast of an individual, not in streams from slaughtered families, but blood in the profusion of an ocean. His usual calculation of the heads which he demanded amounted to two hundred and sixty thousand; and though he sometimes raised it as high as three hundred thousand, it never fell beneath the smaller number. It may be hoped, and for the honour of human nature we are willing to believe, there was a touch of insanity in this unnatural strain of ferocity, and the wild and squalid features of the wretch appear to have intimated a degree of alienation of mind. Marat was, like Robespierre, a coward. Repeatedly denounced in the Assembly, he skulked instead of defending himself, and lay concealed in some obscure garret or cellar among his cut-throats, until a storm appeared, when, like a bird of ill omen, his death-screach was again heard. Such was the strange and fatal triumvirate, in which the same degree of cannibal fury existed under different aspects. Danton murdered to glut his rage, Robespierre to avenge his injured vanity, or to remove a rival whom he envied; Marat from the same instinctive love of blood which induces the wolf to continue his ravage of the flocks long after his hunger is appeased.”

Vol. II. P. 26-7-8.

SOUTHEY'S LIFE OF NELSON.

Oct. 30, 1827.

ALTHOUGH I am a warm admirer of the prose compositions of Southey in general, and consider him upon the whole, as the writer who of all moderns, without pedantry or affectation, goes the farthest to revive the masculine, pure, idiomatic taste of the seventeenth century, yet I think his life of Nelson has been very much overpraised. It seems to me to attempt very little more than the dilatation of an article written up to the level of the obituary of a periodical : containing a dry detail of facts, unenlivened by any of that discursive speculation which so happily identifies the author with his subject, and which in modern biography enlivens and diversifies the narrative without distracting the reader's attention by any irrelevancy. To give an example of my meaning, I need only refer to the beautiful analysis of Sheridan's intellectual processes in Moore's life of that statesman, and the admirable and pertinent reflections upon men and manners, and morals, so lavishly scattered through Johnson's lives of the Poets. It is true that the life and character of Lord Nelson did not afford many favourable opportunities in this kind to his historian. Its most striking and instructive moral is the proof it affords of the rapidity with which the human mind becomes depraved in all its most estimable qualities, when it has once fallen under the subjugation of any bad passion, and this was forbidden ground to the biographer, who seems to have felt his speech interdicted whenever it must cease to be laudatory. In Nelson's instance, nature seems to have practised her wonted frugality, and to have united a mind of an extraordinarily happy organisation with a feeble and morbid constitution of body. In his earlier years he evinced a bravery of that ennobling and generous quality that overlooks all personal considerations in the abundantly zealous discharge of duty, and values life only as it could be serviceable to his country. Humanity in command, and filial and conjugal affection, seem to have combined his into a character very nearly approaching perfection. "But

what a falling off was there!" From the period of his ill-starred connexion with Lady Hamilton, Nelson's very nature seems to have been metamorphosed—a metamorphosis which would be altogether inexplicable if we adopt Mr. Southey's seemingly gratuitous supposition, that that connexion did not transgress the boundaries of Platonism, but which if, according to all probability, we suppose it to have been an adulterous commerce maintained with a passion on Nelson's side almost amounting to frenzy, only affords a fresh attestation to the fact, that the indulgence of one species of crime entails the perpetration of numerous others, and eventually extirpates the moral sense itself. Accordingly, under Lady Hamilton's influence, Nelson's gentleness became changed into ferocity: his almost romantic regard to national honour gave place to a reckless defiance of the most established canons of international faith; his conjugal fidelity was succeeded by the most rooted and unprovoked aversion to an amiable and unoffending woman, and even that quality which he preserved to the last, and on which his fame reposes, his bravery, seems to have been latterly derived from a tainted source. In his early career it was the emanation of the purest patriotism and devotedness to duty. Subsequently it became the apparent result of a despairing disgust of existence, and a reckless eagerness to terminate it. The murder—for it can pass by no other name—of Caraccioli, verifies a good part of the foregoing observations, and his abrupt separation from Lady Nelson, his subsequent neglect of her, even in those dying moments when remorse alone might have recalled her tenderly to his thoughts, establishes the remainder. Nelson's disposition was discontented and querimonious: he considered himself the victim of ministerial cabal and the ill-requited servant of his country. The high commands to which, unassisted by birth or patronage, he attained, at an early stage of life; the honours of the peerage and a handsome pension, serve, I think, to vindicate all parties from this charge. Ingratitude to her statesmen and warriors indeed is not one of England's faults. I have thus attempted to sketch the character of Lord Nelson as it may be elicited from a biography which allows nothing culpable to be seen except "as in a glass, darkly," and that character affords another instance of how the love and veneration of a nation is to be purchased by successful enterprise, even in conjunction with so much of what would render a private person odious and even contemptible.

Mr. Southey, amongst other praise, has obtained that of extreme animation and perspicuity in his descriptions of the tactics exhibited in Lord Nelson's naval engagements. As the want of distinct ideas from those descriptions felt by me, may be as well imputable to my own confusion of mind as to the author's opacity of style, it would be presumptuous in me to dispute the fact, although I cannot from experience corroborate it.

THE O'BRIENS AND O'FLAHERTYS.

Here falling houses thunder on your head,
And here a female atheist talks you dead.

JOHNSON'S LONDON.

Nov. 21, 1827.

IF any one wishes to convince himself of the utter worthlessness, venality and falsehood of the panegyrics put forth by the inferior literary scribes, let him only compare their fulsome bespatterings of this most wretched production with its deserts. The O'Briens and O'Flahertys not only exhibits all the faults of its author's former performances in broader relief, but is unredeemed by any of the merits that partially expiated them. It has much of the incongruity and extravagance of Banim, without his force; and from the arrogant pretension with which it is ushered forth, is a thing, to all seeming, especially calculated to whet the scalpel of criticism to its deadliest keenness. Besides the pertness, ignorance and presumption always the main constituents of Lady Morgan's writings, we have in the present a most unconscionable allotment of dulness—sheer, absolute, dreamy dulness—that soporific drug from which heretofore her literary potions were always pure. Thus her name appears to a compound in which improbability of plot, extravagance of character, incoherence of incident, historical anachronism, bombastic political declamation, and a wild preposterous winding up, are poorly atoned for by some graphic power in the landscape, and some tolerably imagined situations in the characters. After a very saucy preface, in which she swaggeringly disclaims all personality,

as if individual character were quarry below her aim, there follows an array of individuals too broadly marked to be for a moment unrecognised : nor is this identity effected by an ingenious or delicate delineation of their more discriminating shades of peculiarity, but by the sign-post coarseness of resemblance, which, sign-post like, requires the name to be written in legible characters underneath. Thus to detect the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, you want no other clue than their title of the Duke and Duchess of Belvoir, and those who know Lady Manners's history, her change of religion and elevation of rank, identify her at once with the very insipid Kitty Macguire. Neither is this novel original : Lady Morgan, like all the existing dabblers in fiction—the *imitatores, servile pecus*, must give her Birmingham impression of Sir Walter Scott. *Shane*, a compound intended to excite alternate laughter and awe, is evidently taken from him, and it is perhaps this attempt to draw from the same source, equally discernible and almost equally abortive in both writers, that produces the resemblance already noticed between Lady Morgan and Banim. Absurdities flow so thick upon one that selection is difficult, and to enumerate all would be as useless as irksome. Let a Jesuit nun, after scouring all Europe with the *ubiquity of a bird*, and settling into the wife of an Irish refugee, having previously inherited the immense wealth of a Jesuit uncle, serve as a specimen of information upon the rules of this order with the talismanic name. The historic and chronological fidelity (of, by the bye, an historical novel,) will be exemplified by the felicitous amalgam of the Duke of Rutland's viceroyalty, the volunteer parades, and the excesses of the French revolution, into one contemporaneous epoch. And oh ! for those who wish to learn the tone and air, the pomp, pride and circumstance of glorious fashion, what a rich repertory is opened in the solecismatic English and slip-slop French, so luculently flowing from the graceful lips of Ladies Knock-lofty and Honoria Stratton ! Any page, however casually opened, will afford abundant instances of the vulgar, ignorant and conceited flippancy which pervades the whole.

Bad English (except my own) is interdicted from these pages, so the foregoing remarks will not derive any cogency from exemplification.

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE.

Dec. 1, 1827.

"THE bane and antidote are both before you." It is perhaps difficult to imagine a higher intellectual treat than is afforded by a transition from Lady Morgan to Sir Walter Scott : to have the painful elaboration of effect in the inflated slip-slop of the one, succeeded by the bold, facile transcripts of nature, enunciated in the flowing and appropriate diction of the other. It is perhaps from some of these effects of contrast that I have been led to form, I believe, a singularly high estimate of the *Chronicles of the Canongate* ; and if not to rank it amongst the best of Scott's works, at least to cite it as a demonstration that his powers are unimpaired and his resources unimpoverished. Like the generality of this transcendent author's works, the present is not always equable ; the three stories which compose it are all of essentially different scales of merit : "The Highland Widow," the most characteristic of the author, is incomparably the best. It is replete with those alternations of sublimity and tenderness, both in the scenic descriptions and delineations of human passions, which confer such delightful diversifications upon whatever story they are made the accessory. The "Surgeon's Daughter" the next in order of merit, sparkles throughout with passages of rare brilliancy, and touches of genuine and home-felt nature ; but those beauties are fewer and further between than in its companion just mentioned. It also suffers from the transference of the scene to India and the landscape being taken in a less picturesque and familiar region than Scotland. It appears to me moreover that the principal character degenerates too quickly and completely from youthful and pardonable frailty into total wickedness. "The Highland Drovers," the remaining story, appears to me censurable both for its execution and tendency. It is written without any complexity of plot, and besides being unmarked by passages of extraordinary power, seems chargeable with the faulty moral of claiming sympathy for the

perpetrator of a crime of savage and disproportioned revenge. It is however in the introductory sketch with which those tales are prefaced, that Scott's genius beams out in all its native refulgence. The entire ménage of Mrs. Bethune Baliol; her house and furniture and curiosities described with such a graphic power of true antiquarian gust; and herself, more exquisite than all, portrayed in such vivid though softened tints, appearing to the "mind's eye," like one of those beautiful Vandykes, where the fidelity of individual resemblance along with the habits, dispositions and station in life, are verified at once by the harmonious cast of countenance and the appropriateness of the drapery. There is less of humour and mirthful excitement about the Chronicles on the whole than perhaps in any former production of Scott's. The catastrophes are all gloomy, and the summary intimation that Mrs. Baliol's mansion is now levelled to the ground and its courtly and delightful inhabitant gathered to her fathers, has its own share in the depressing influences produced by the entire collection.

The following passage, although containing a fine picture of mental decay, is not selected as one of the best in the book, but because I have not hitherto made any transcripts in the same style.

"The easy chair filled with cushions, the extended limbs swathed in flannel, the wide wrapping-gown and night-cap, showed illness; but the dimmed eye, once so replete with living fire, the blubber lip, whose dilation and compression used to give such character to his animated countenance—the stammering tongue, that once poured forth such floods of masculine eloquence, and had often swayed the opinion of the sages whom he addressed—all these sad symptoms evinced that my friend was in the melancholy condition of those in whom the principle of animal life has unfortunately survived that of mental intelligence. He gazed a moment at me, but then seemed insensible of my presence, and went on—he, once the most courteous and well-bred—to babble unintelligible but violent reproaches against his niece and servant, because he himself had dropped a tea-cup in attempting to place it on a table at his elbow. His eyes caught a momentary fire from his irritation; but he struggled in vain for words to express himself adequately, as, looking from his servant to his niece, and then to the table, he la-

boured to explain that they had placed it (though it touched his chair) at too great a distance from him."

Vol. 1. P. 14-15.

DE ROOS'S TRAVELS IN N. AMERICA.

Dec. 8, 1827.

It is gratifying to see so many of the rising generation of the English nobility labouring with such success to vindicate their caste from the sarcasms against their intellectual endowments, which have for so long obtained currency. The galling antithesis imputed to Johnson as to lordly wit, and the waggish designation of "Hospital of Incurables" applied to the House of Peers, had been either utterly forgotten or remembered only as tersely phrased libels, had the patrician ranks of that time contained such men as the Lords Porchester, Normanby and John Russell of the present day, and the leaders of the aristocracy then as now, not been content to rest their claims upon the *aliena fama* of their ancestors, but been employed in seeking honourable distinction in the liberal and enlightened arts by which the rapid march of intellect is kept pace with and assisted by wise and liberal legislation. To this respectable class the name of Mr. De Roos deserves to be honourably added. His book is creditable both to his natural capacity and his acquired cultivation, and will claim the more praise when it is considered at what a very tender age the naval profession is generally embraced, and how unfavourable its discipline is to mental culture. The main object of the "Travels in North America" seems to have been the ascertainment by actual observation, of the strength and character of the American navy. The topics of mere curiosity contained, are a description of the falls of Niagara; of the external appearance and social constitution of the city of Quebec, together with some light sketches of the quality of travelling in the United States and of the general aspect of the country. If Mr. De Roos be a competent and unprejudiced judge, the vaunted American navy is in a state of almost total weakness and disorganization, and both as to ships and crews, quite inadequate to resist even a respectable

British Squadron. But here the question will obtrude itself, how it happened that such a navy was able to achieve so important victories against the despot of the seas, in a first trial of strength and with all the prepossessions of all parties,—the moral force, so important an odds in war—so decidedly in favour of its adversary? If the answer be, that although Mr. De Roos be correct in his account of the actual state of the American marine, yet that her vast forests, her rapidly advancing colonisation, the resources of a nation unoppressed by an unwieldy national debt, and supported by a free and united people, present a combination of means that enables her to provide for an emergency with a promptitude and on a scale of magnitude incomprehensible to less fortunately circumstanced states; then has Mr. De Roos's detail done little to remove the apprehensive jealousy of Great Britain, or to abate the feeling of confidence with which Ireland regards the United States as the no very distant avenger of her wrongs.

Mr. De Roos exhibits very superior descriptive powers in various passages of his book—more particularly in that which most adequately calls them forth—his account of the falls of Niagara, both in their natural and moral attributes. Not only their locality and external appearance are graphically delineated, but the sensations they are calculated to excite in a mind of sensibility and reflection, are forcibly conveyed in the very eloquent and unaffected transcript of the author's own emotions on their contemplation. The portraiture of American character and manners is on the whole very favourable, and I should suppose, perfectly veracious. So far from encountering any of that jealous antipathy to the mother country so generally ascribed to the free Americans, M. De Roos considers the knowledge of his nation to have been his best passport to the acquaintance and favour of the most respectable society. The fact is, I believe, that travellers most commonly find their reception in foreign countries to be the reflection of their individual deportment. The general resemblance of all mankind justifies us in believing that a traveller going forth with the good humour, frankness and indulgence to national peculiarities which characterize Mr. De Roos, will meet with general welcome and favour, and will thence find kindly sentiments generated in his own heart towards his entertainers. But unfortunately John Bull most usually leaves home in an opposite frame of mind. Believing his own to be the finest country in the

world, he feels himself nevertheless fully privileged to grumble at every thing constituting this supremacy in the detail. *A fortiori* he grumbles the more sedulously when he visits regions suggesting so many unfavourable points of comparison with home : thus he provokes national pride and returns from his travels with an unfavourable opinion of persons whose vanity he has affronted and whose nationality he has provoked by his indiscretion and ill humour.

My reviews have fallen greatly into arrear—so much so as to have rendered necessary the return of all library books before the commencement of such tardy criticism. I should willingly have transcribed some portion of the description of Niagara to which I have already adverted.

NAPOLEON IN THE OTHER WORLD.

Dec. 12 1827.

THIS is such an absurd, incongruous farrago, as defies any analysis. Its purpose seems to have been to pander to the anti-popery prejudices of the English people by disgorging every kind of calumnious abuse against the Catholic communion and its most renowned supporters. Yet even this design is not clearly perceptible through the foggy opacity in which the author has involved his meaning. With all the latitude for the expression of sentiment or the development of theories afforded by dialogues of the dead, in which all times and all nations may be made contributory of authorities germane to any matter : it is quite impossible after reading this volume through, to guess at what precept moral or political the author is labouring to establish. There is a species of machinery introduced which is equally unmeaning. The spirits and localities of other worlds have heretofore been always made subservient to the business of the narrative, by being invested with some allegorical significances ; but although the city of the lower regions is diffusely and elaborately described and its topography even elucidated by a drawing, it is quite inexplicable why or wherefore so much letter press is filled with the description of gates and towers, walls and bridges of

which no use is made. In this tissue of elaborate and clumsy vagueness, but one object is at all discernible, and that is, as before mentioned, the degradation of the Catholic religion. Happy religion if all its assailants aimed their blows with as little force and steadiness as the author of Napoleon in the other world !

LOCH ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE STAFFORD ESTATE.

Dec. 16, 1827.

ABOUT ten years ago ; perhaps before the proposition had been clearly stated, and certainly before it had been coolly examined, how far a landlord had a right to consult his own interests exclusively, in thinning, or altogether extirpating from his estate a population which had grown too unwieldy to be an available tenantry, or indeed to yield him any proprietary returns whatever, the Marquess and Marchioness of Stafford tried upon a scale which a thickly peopled estate of 800,000 acres enabled them to do, the experiment of transferring the entire of an inland population in Sutherland to the sea coast, and the more remarkable one consequent thereon, of altering their mode of life from pastoral to seafaring and manufacturing pursuits, at the same time, converting the unoccupied districts into immense sheep-walks. It appears that a society, whose objects I do not know, called the Highland Society, took great exception to this procedure, and their sentiments were lustily echoed and diffused far and wide by a certain portion of the public press ; so that for a considerable time, the newspapers were filled with pathetic details of the cruelties practised against the Stafford tenantry in the Highlands ; the unroofing and burning their cabins and driving themselves out destitute and penniless to seek shelter as they might, and so forth. To all this clamour and these tirades, the noble objects of them appear to have been most stoically indifferent, whether from the consciousness of that rectitude which is the best armour against calumny, or from a desire of awaiting the result of

an important and avowedly untried experiment, it does not appear; but Mr Loch's book did not come forth for several years after these imputations had been cast, and even in it, the vindication of Lord and Lady Stafford, complete and triumphant as it is, has been rather an incidental introduction than the main object and design of the author. Indeed it would have been impossible for Mr. Loch, in a work purporting to convey practical information upon the management of the Stafford estate, to have avoided entering minutely upon the subject of the previous and actual condition of the Sutherland tenantry, and the results which their change of locality and habits of existence had effected; and it is by showing how this change was wrought, and the consequences that have sprung from it, that he gives the most decisive contradiction to Lord and Lady Stafford's accusers, and establishes their claim to encomium in the direct proportion that they have encountered obloquy. Nothing indeed can be more satisfactory than the proof contained in this volume of the facility with which, by judicious contrivance, and persevering, though humane effectuation, an entire peasantry, primitive in their habits, uninstructed in any department of education, almost cut off from all intercourse with the rest of mankind—beings whose existence depended upon the scanty produce of a sterile and unreclaimed soil, or the still more precarious resources of the chase; from being a burden to their landlord, whose estates they oppressed and to whose wealth they never contributed, may be converted into an orderly, thriving population, living within the precincts of sea-port towns and villages, amenable to laws; participating in the religious and secular education now so universally extending, and, (perhaps the most authentic test of their improved civilization,) ardent and adventurous in the acquisition of gain.

Mr. Loch is at a good deal of pains to remove the scales from his reader's eyes which he supposes may have been engendered by contemplating objects through poetic and fictitious media, rather than with the steady perspicacity of cool, practical examination; and to show how amply the contraction of the regions of the fancy are compensated by the extension of the field of real, substantial improvement, in the innovations he details. In this part of his book Mr. Loch evinces that he can feel as well as reason, and we the more willingly defer to his opinions, because we see they are not the emanations of a phlegmatic calculating temperament, but the

results of the subjugation of a very considerable force of imagination and strong sympathy with the materials of poetry and romance, to the dictates of practical sense and well-directed philanthropy.

The execution of Mr. Loch's work has kept pace with its excellent design : it is written in pure language ; the scenic descriptions are vivid and graphic, and his speculations as to the advances already made and to be hereafter made by a people hitherto remarkably in the wake of their age,—speculations founded upon the solid data of judicious experiment,—present a most gratifying picture to all who feel a due interest in the amelioration of our species.

FIVE YEARS

RESIDENCE IN BUENOS AYRES.

Dec. 21, 1827.

I REMEMBER the following particulars of this book—that it states the expense of the voyage from London to Buenos Ayres to be 80 pounds sterling ; that meat will not keep untainted in the warm months for more than twenty four hours at Buenos Ayres ; that the flat roofs of the houses there were of great advantage to the defenders of the city against Whitlocke in 1806 ; and that the mode of gentlemen's salutation of ladies, by taking the hat off from the *back* of the head, like (as the author says) persons who wear wigs, is, in his opinion, very graceful. Such are the consequences of trusting at the distance of three months to the power of a weak memory to retain the contents of an unimpressive book.

YES AND NO.

Jan. 2, 1828.

LORD Normanby and Mr. Lyster appear by general suffrage to be constituted the accredited historiographers of fashionable society. The qualifications of the latter seem reducible to that one of pri-

mary necessity, an acquaintance with his subject matter, and a power of diffusing it through a very agreeable medium of easy, graceful writing. Lord Normanby superadds to these requisites a very considerable art of individualising character, of weaving a story, and of inventing situations both humorous and pathetic. In this, his last novel, his purpose seems to have been to illustrate the opposite evils of a too great facility, and a too great inflexibility of character; and with this view he has imagined two heroes whose dispositions have these contrasted peculiarities. I think the tale which has been reared upon this foundation is faulty in point of moral. Of the two extremes, that of ductility, though perhaps the most amiable, is surely the least respectable; yet in his final distribution, the author has lavished all the felicity upon the assentient party, and the poor recusant, who is possessed of every really essential good quality, is despatched by a violent death, merely because he was too sincere to conceal disgusts in which I think the reader will be much disposed to participate.

That comparisons are odious, Lord Normanby will be willing to admit, if in the inevitable reference of this to the standard of his "*Matilda*," the public should pronounce the same falling off in the more recent work that strikes me. Its inferiority is chiefly to be found in the pathetic and humorous parts. In "*Yes and No*," there is but one situation of the former kind: that immediately preceding the duel and death of Oakley; and I do not recollect any comic scene except the exhibition of Germaine's first love at the country ball, and this is not executed with much discrimination or originality. With all these deductions however, this tale possesses very considerable merit: it is written in a graceful, flowing style, and presents a portraiture of fashionable life which from its easiness of attitude and harmony of features, it is not difficult for even those who cannot verify it by the original, to pronounce to be a strong resemblance. Lord Normanby deserves praise also for the tact with which he makes the delineation of fashionable manners and habits of life, seem only to be the accessories of his story, instead of making the story—if the meagre incidents of the average of these works may be called one—a mere series of scene-shifting for the exhibition of the busy inanity and laborious frivolity, imputed to the aristocracy by their representatives in the common run of works of fiction.

RED ROVER.

Jan. 21, 1828.

I THINK all diversities of readers must agree that the Red Rover is a production that abounds with the traces of a powerful and original imagination, and that it is replete with conspicuous beauties and glaring faults. After these general concessions, I can conceive much contrariety of opinion to exist as to the preponderance of these beauties or these faults; and that a very debateable question may be asked, as to whether the "Red Rover" be on the whole calculated to please, or in other words, whether it is a good novel. The novelty and force with which many of the characters are delineated, and the spirit-stirring vigour of their enterprises, will engage the affections of such readers as derive entertainment from the mere contemplation of the human character in various original modifications, and placed in situations requiring the exertion of its most energetic qualities. To those on the other hand—and I confess myself to be of the number,—who require scenic accessories; the conjunction of the phænomena of inanimate, with the agency of sentient nature, this story with its locality almost as permanently fixed upon the sea, as that of a French play is to its hall or portico, is frequently rather fatiguing. A storm, a shipwreck, and a battle, are the only varieties by the aid of which a sea scene can be made interesting to the terra-firmist. These events, although worn pretty threadbare, are again called into requisition by Mr. Cooper. He treats them with more of experimental skill perhaps than any of his predecessors, but without exhibiting any of them under more impressive features than they have received, not only from imaginative description, but from authentic narrative. Mr. Cooper endeavours to create a supplement to these commonplaces by a display of the minute technicalities of naval architecture and marine tactics, which, however useful they might be to give likelihood and animation, if sparingly employed, are repeated with a

frequency and explained with a fulness that can only be interesting to one of the craft. To the reader who knows only enough of seafaring to detest it, all this elaboration is downright disagreeable. The author, by his great mastery over the imagination, through the fidelity of his representations, actually makes the head dizzy and the stomach qualmy with his reefing, and tacking, and lurching, and all the et cetera of nautical evolutions. Another great defect in the "Red Rover" is its poverty of story and the injudicious management of what little there is. A slender rill of fable, after originating at an improbable source, and following an unnatural stream, is eventually quite lost in the misty opacity which overhangs its course.

All these faults and more, *quos numerare tædet*, are however overborne—at least so far as to secure to Mr. Cooper the reputation of a man of brilliant talents—by his splendid creations in his own species. His entire band of pirates with their compelled associates, Fid and his Nigger, are powerfully sketched. I do not think so highly of either the Red Rover himself or Wildair, for they both want perfect originality. The first has many archetypes; Lord Byron having first given a vogue to amiable freebooters whose only drawback from a constellation of the noblest qualities is the want of an acute perception of the difference between *meum* and *tuum*. Cleveland too, in Sir Walter Scott's work, seems to have more immediately suggested the character of the Rover, and to the last-named source is Mr. Cooper also indebted for a generic original of his Wildair, who, like many of the heroes in the Scottish stories, is rather a peg to hang a tale upon, than a very efficient instrument in its progress.

THE PRAIRIE.

Jan. 26, 1828.

THE novel last under consideration gave me a desire for further acquaintance with Mr. Cooper, which his "Prairie" has deprived me of all anxiety to mature. Exhibiting an aggravation of all the faults

and an absence of all the redeeming merits of the "Red Rover", it is rather surprising, and certainly highly creditable to Mr. Cooper, that a work should have proceeded from his pen so immeasurably superior in both these particulars to its immediate predecessor, and one which it would never have been my fate to open, had my introduction to its author been according to the chronology of his writings. The best criticism on the "Prairie" is expressed in one word—disagreeable. It is disagreeable in its scenery; disagreeable in its representation of human character; and disagreeable in its strains after effect, the failure of which following vehement effort, marks either absolute weakness or distempered and misdirected strength. Besides so barren of incident is the whole work, that I can only account for a reader endowed with but a moderate stock of patience getting to the end, by supposing him, like myself, to wade through the first volume in quest of a story; through the second, to discover what that story is, and then to struggle to the conclusion in the hope of finding something compensatory of preceding dulness—a hope destined to be cruelly disappointed, but still kept up to the last by the glimmerings of talent, few and faint though they be, which sometimes appear and lure one onwards. To particularize a little: Mr. Cooper is most unfortunate in what he might himself call his *locations*. I have already observed upon the disadvantage he labours under in his "Red Rover", from selecting the sea as his theatre of events. His preference for the waste of waters is marked in the present production by his making choice of a landscape in as close similitude to it as the difference of the elements would admit of. The transactions all occur upon a barren and wide-spreading waste, swelling throughout into mounds of uniform size and shape, and looking like a sea suddenly petrified, or rather, if the coinage be allowed, *terrefied*: for such is the description of a *prairie*. The narrative is even more scantily diversified with incidents than that of the "Red Rover" and is still further inferior, from being conversant about persons for whom one can feel no interest or good will. These are, in the first place, a sage who remains anonymous throughout, and is only designated from his mode of catching wild animals:—the "Trapper." This is one of those convenient allies of a clumsy composer, who, like the genie in the Eastern tale, always appears opportunely to extricate the machinery from a perplexity from which probable or natural means will be vainly invoked to relieve it:

the God whose agency is exhausted in unworthy offices by writers incapable of forming the *dignus vindice nodus*. Then comes a family of gigantic stature, uncultivated and ferocious temperament, and vagabond profession, headed by a patriarch named Ishmael Bush or most commonly, "the Squatter,"—escorting through this terrestrial ocean a tent containing a young lady kidnapped from her friends by these respectable aborigines. There is also a young woman, a connexion and a kind of constrained attendant upon this family party, and her lover, who is always hovering about their encampment, and these are the best drawn and most estimable characters in the book. A party of Indians warring with the Squatter and headed by a red juvenal who achieves prodigies of valour and talks the metaphoric jargon "in such case made and provided," constitute with the others just enumerated, the principal agents of the story. To these are added two dogs, prominent and efficient characters, but totally divested of those traits which some more accurate observers of the lower animals know so well how to exhibit, without any departure from truth or nature.

And so end my remarks upon a tedious, over-wrought, irksome performance.

TEELING'S REBELLION OF 1798.

March 11, 1828.

I BORROWED this book with something like avidity. I knew that the writer took a very prominent part in the agitations of 1798, and without expecting a polished, scholar-like history, I did promise myself what would have been more to the purpose; a considerable accession to my information respecting this eventful period, upon the authority of a participator and an eyewitness, and in a work which had the sanction of the author's name. I expected that facts hitherto distorted, or suppressed, would have been brought to light: that characters tarnished with the imputation of treason, would have been restored to their rightful fairness; and the excesses of a party goaded into insurrection and phrensy, palliated if not

excused, upon the principle of retaliation. I looked, not for that which is perhaps incompatible with contemporary history—a strict impartiality, but for the means of conjecturing the truth by taking a mean between the allowable bias that Mr. Teeling might evince, and the antagonist propensions of the other side. Moreover the time of publication afforded something of a pledge for coolness and candour, and was fortunately, if not judiciously selected. It is sufficiently near the epoch of the rebellion to warrant the freshness and distinctness with which its events must live in the writer's memory, and to have enabled him to rekindle those emotions of compassion and regret for the fate of the victims, which cannot yet be extinct in the hearts of their numerous surviving connexions and friends. The period is on the other hand, sufficiently remote to allow the naturally heated feelings of a partisan and a sufferer to subside into temperance, and the wounds which had bled so profusely, to be felt and examined without the risk of opening their long closed scars. Besides, from the change of men and measures which the interim has witnessed, we might reckon upon that frankness and fearlessness which the feeling of perfect impunity, and nothing else, can confer. Mr. Teeling has however, not availed himself of any of these advantages, and a narrative of the incidents of the Irish Rebellion by one of the losing side, is no less a desideratum now than before his authorship. The tone of this work is at once blustering and timid : the author appears as if he still dreaded those very tyrants against whom he vents his indignation : as if the triangles in Beresford's Gymnasium were yet present to “ his mind's eye,” and Lord Castlereagh's carotid artery still unsevered. His style is accordingly verbose, tumid, and opaque. He tells nothing simply or clearly ; not even to the giving a plain and consecutive account of himself. Although the legal maxim of withholding self-crimination may be of universal applicability, yet surely the reader had some right to be informed whether or not the auto-biographer was justly chargeable with what was laid to his account. Mr. Teeling however keeps this matter in the dark, and thus the most interesting part of his book ; the account of the rising in Ulster and the details of those massacres which were termed battles by the victims, is altogether marred by the obscurity in which the question is left, whether the relation be on hearsay, or on the credit of an eye-

witness. In place of a discriminated delineation of all the leaders of the insurgents, which would have been so interesting, so curious, and so new, we are sated with vague, declamatory panegyrics upon each of them, in which nothing individual or characteristic is discernible. When he attempts invective, he is equally diffusive and ineffectual, as in the instance of his tirade against Lord Castlereagh. If Mr. Teeling's object had been to write a book, as the nobleman just named used to make a speech, without disclosing anything, his style perhaps is not inappropriate : nothing however could be a more unsuitable vehicle for plain, authentic truth than the inflated and redundant verbiage that everywhere disfigures this production.

SKETCHES IN THE WEST INDIES.

March 23, 1828.

THE descriptive part of this volume occupies but a small portion of it, and seems to have been a secondary object of the author, nor does the mind admit very implicitly anything like an attractive picture of West Indian scenery and habits. The climate, the fearful climate, forms an effectual repellent to our sympathies with such representations. To have your friend swept off by a two day-fever, and your house tumbled down by a two hours hurricane, are events which too pointedly impress on one the instability of life and property, to make the details of either very interesting. The chief object which the author seems to have had in view, was to inculcate some obvious, but hitherto apparently unregarded cautions respecting the abolition of the slave-trade, and on this subject he expresses himself with a calmness and good sense which tend greatly to enforce his sentiments. He of course does not defend the principle of negro slavery, nor even go the length of saying that its continuance should be permitted; but he urges the utmost caution in effecting its extinction, both with regard to the interests of the proprietor and of the slave himself. He argues very justly, that however revolting to human nature, and however unjustifiable upon every moral principle, the traffic in human flesh may have been at its inception, it has nevertheless been sanctioned by the express pro-

tection, or else indirect connivance of almost all the governments of Europe. Property having been embarked, and vested rights acquired under that sanction or connivance, which on no principle of justice or national faith can be disregarded, consequently a preliminary of absolute necessity to the manumission of the slave is the securing complete indemnity to the owner; and this I think must be conceded to be a claim of undeniable right. The author is not less persuasive when he treats of the effects of precipitancy upon the black population themselves, and his opinions are supported as well by a reference to abstract human nature, as by historical fact. Every reflecting mind must agree that man, both in his moral and physical constitution, is unable to bear a sudden and violent transition of any kind; and that as to the immediate effects of such change, it is pretty much indifferent whether it be from bad to good or the contrary. If the soil be not previously prepared for the seed, it will either be totally unproductive and rot, or spring up into rank and noxious luxuriance. The historical corroboration of this theory most applicable to the writer's purpose, is derived from the events of the revolutionized St. Domingo. The experiment of suddenly setting free a slave population was there tried in the height of the liberalising phrensy of revolutionary France, and the consequences are indeed appalling. From being at once a garden to delight the senses and to dispense its superfluous treasures far and wide, this beautiful island is become almost an uncultivated waste, and has retrograded in the civilization of its inhabitants not only from what it was previous to the period of its liberation, but even from its condition when Columbus and his crew, captivated with its beauty and with the gentleness and benevolence of its primitive possessors, annexed it to the Spanish monarchy.

This gentleman writes in a plain, unembarrassed style, and throughout gives evidences of a well cultivated and reflecting mind. It will be well if those whom it may concern, profit by his suggestions, and effect their ameliorations with care and circumspection, recollecting the maxim that,

Vitia dum vitant stultæ,
In contraria ruunt.

LONDON CLUBS.

March 28, 1828.

UNDER this title are contained two volumes of very palatable ingredients, compounded into an extremely piquant and variegated relish. Without preferring claims to much poignancy of wit or exuberance of humour, a terse and fluent narrative, much graphical power in personal delineation, a variety of select and original anecdote, and a nice preservation of the rather insinuated than expressed character of the writer, give this book a claim upon a vacant hour which will readily be admitted. The character assumed by the author is that of an established clubbist, and the propensities which such habits of life would naturally generate, are developed with much art. The true Epicurean is indeed, perhaps, one of the most entertaining individuals that can be submitted to analysis. His fastidiousness and sensuality excite our smiles, while, if genuine, they imply a degree of refinement that secures some portion of respect; but when he discusses the requisites for the higher gratifications of sensuality—the union of cultivated minds, bound together by a congeniality of tastes and an identity of purpose; that of imparting and receiving pleasure,—when these things are painted by the man who best can feel and best can practise them, all our criticism is absorbed in admiration and envy—admiration at the talents which are so effectually exerted to convert the thorns of existence into flowers, and envy (perhaps the word is too strong,) of the abundant fruits which are reaped by their possessor. The author of the “London Clubs” exhibits a good deal of all this, and should he endite a work on a plan admitting of more original sentiment, we shall probably find those pictures of sublunary bliss more thickly scattered and more highly finished.

MRS. HERBERT.

April 18, 1828.

THE work bearing this title is composed of a series of dialogues between a lady of education and fortune, and a party of her humbler neighbours, in which the doctrines of the Roman Catholic faith are fully unfolded, and the morality they enforce, explained and illustrated. Like Miss Edgeworth, Miss Bodenham is emphatically a writer of common sense, and to that faculty all her appeals are ultimately addressed. In the task she has assumed, a style of so happy a temperament is chosen, that its grace and polish recommend it to the cultivated reader, while its simplicity and perspicuity render it level to the meanest capacity : this combination, so rarely found, will require a writer of some degree of practice fully to appreciate. They who only judge of the merit of a work by its apparent elaboration, will see nothing of the art by which style and diction are thus refined to the effectual concealment of that art itself. The author has besides the great merit of not permitting the importance and solemnity of her subject to betray her into any austerity of manner : on the contrary, the characters are discriminated with a delicacy and tact which give considerable dramatic power to the dialogues, and admit of both the pathetic and humorous having appropriate places. Miss Bodenham's knowledge of human nature must indeed have satisfied her that to convince through the medium of pleasing, is the only way to convince at all, because the only way of being heard to an end. By the aid of "Mrs. Herbert", the well-instructed catholic will find his knowledge enlarged ; what is new to him presented in original and striking lights, and what is already familiar, illustrated with a conciseness and perspicuity scarcely less valuable to him ; while the uninformed will be suited with a defensive armour of the best proof against all the popular topics of declamation against his religion, and he who would be quite incapable of following arguments upon the metaphysical subtleties of revela-

tion, will, at all events, be able to give solid and sensible reasons "for the faith that is in him." In this controversial age, when doctrinal topics not only engross the church, but invade the drawing room, and the tap-house, it is a great merit to have written a work so eminently adapted to popular diffusion. I have not preserved any extract, which I have reason to regret, as there abound passages which for sentiment and expression would have been well worth transcription.

HERBERT LACY.

April 18, 1828.

MY taste for light reading, with its direction to the current literature of the day, has rendered these memoranda the depository of comments on several modern novels, which would be equally appropriate to "Herbert Lacy," a work exhibiting all their distinctive characteristics. An absence of all romantic adventure, succeeded by so cautious an adherence to probability as sometimes to verge upon the confines of the insipid; a graceful, water-colour sketch of the Cynthia of the minute, the most approved abstraction of fashionable life; a perception of the many absurdities and contemptible traits of that abstraction, sufficiently acute to transmit a humorous and piquant representation to the reader, but that perception deadened and that representation consequently softened by the latent sympathies of one of the clique; an unvarying current of good language; and a style which with too little idiosyncrasy to be striking, is free from any positive blemish. Such is the hasty enumeration of some of the most marked constituents of that rapidly increasing class, the novel purporting to pourtray fashionable life by a fashionable man. That such novels are useful and entertaining must I think be conceded; bearing the stamp of authenticity from the rank of their author, they aim at something higher than the mere novel, and by their fidelity of general resemblance assert some claim to the dignity of history; just as a gallery of portraits is valuable even when we

know nothing of the originals, nor have much reason to admire their copies on the score of art, from their perpetuating the costume of the times when they were painted.

I have had occasion to say something very like this before, and it is confirmatory of the justness of my previous sentiments, that they recur upon the perusal of a new work obviously constructed upon the plan of the former ones which produced them.

Although so many superior works to Mr. Lyster's have been recently despatched without quotation, I mean to give an extensive one from "Herbert Lacy." It contains an admirable analysis of a character of natural vigour and worth warped and blemished by untoward circumstances. It does the author's acumen almost equal credit whether it be but "fancy's sketch," or a portrait. In the former case, I myself can attest the fidelity of its resemblance to at least *one* specimen of human nature. If a portrait, it is, I am sure, as admirable for its likeness as it certainly is for its high and delicate finish.

"I know that I wanted occupation and an object. I had neither a prospect to interest me, nor a gratifying retrospect: all was centred in the present. I set out with the advantages of a good family, respectable station, ample fortune, and, I will add, no mean abilities. The three former I retain; but what use have I made of the latter? None,—I grieve to say it—none. Indolence and fastidiousness have prevented me. Cursed with a sensitive delicacy, and a hatred of exertion, I always quickly discovered something coarse, mean, or revolting in every thing that I had a disinclination to do. The paths to Parliament were miry; office, a state of corruption; all business brings one into contact with rogues; and even the exertions which society demands may be reprobated as subserviency and cringing.

"I cared for nothing, and would do nothing. I was and would be independent—and independence has a flattering sound. It is the noblest, safest plea that ever was made for absence of exertion, and deserves to be engraved on the most towering pinnacle of the castle of indolence. I would not press and labour, and elbow and trundle. I would look with calm superiority on the distant turmoil, and enjoy the charms of literary leisure. Literary leisure! Choice and beautiful phrase! Its very alliteration is sweet and seductive. But call it by its true name, literary idleness, and how much of its

fancied dignity is lost! Yet such was mine; and I can remember to have regarded exertion in that walk as a degrading drudgery. It is easy to wrap oneself up in fancied importance, and say 'My mind to me a kingdom is.' Yes, such a king I was, but it was a '*Roi fainéant*,' a sort of rural Sardanapalus in my petty territory."

V. 3. P. 279-80.

ITALY AS IT IS.

April 12, 1828.

MR. BEST, for so it is said is named the author of "Four years in France," and of the present work forming a sequel to it, besides possessing the more obvious requisites of an agreeable tourist; good sense, cultivation and worldly experience, is, I think, an author of eminent weight upon the condition of a catholic country, from the peculiar circumstances of his history. Educated a protestant, he must be free from all those prepossessions in favour of an opposite creed which are so forcibly created and strengthened by early associations and long cherished habit; and having adopted the catholic religion from pure conviction, he is the better enabled to defend its worship against the attacks of his superficial countrymen, and to expose the weakness of these attacks themselves, from the community of sentiment which he so long cherished with their authors. He can also distinguish between the essential and the adventitious, and while his conviction embraces the one, his taste naturally revolts and his candour exclaims very often against the other. Thus, while he indignantly repels the charge of idolatry as affecting the pure Roman Catholic worship, he admits that it may practically exist among many of its ignorant votaries, and more than hints at the expediency of those reforms in ceremonial which would suit the more refined taste of modern times. In short he sees with English eyes and feels with an English heart, but they are eyes with the scales of prejudice removed, and a heart acknowledging sympathy with general humanity; not bleeding for the sufferings of a West Indian slave, and callous to the tenfold greater misery of an Irish Roman Catholic peasant.

This volume, like its predecessor, aims at the imparting of useful practical information for the guidance of travellers, and especially of such as wish to blend enjoyment and economy together, rather than at any very great depth of political remark, historical research or critical dissertation. Indeed, the utter absence of the *virtuoso* is felt throughout, and must be acknowledged to the credit of the author's good sense, and the attractiveness of his book. It is true, he comments freely upon many works of art, both in architecture, sculpture and painting; but it is in the unaffected language of a man who trusts to the justness of his feelings and does not suffer himself to be clogged by the trammels of technicalities. The remarks of such a writer, although not made *ex cathedra*, are not therefore to be contemned; on the contrary, the person of general information will perhaps be able, from the affinity of the fine arts to each other, to pronounce more correct judgments concerning the aggregate merits of a work in any one department of them, than he whose attention has been limited to that one exclusively; and I much doubt whether any mere artist could derive the same delight from the Apollo and Venus as he whose mind was familiar with the poetic descriptions of antiquity, and thus, as it were, capable of comparing a portrait with an original, and illustrating one of the fine arts by another.

I copy some reflections suggested by a comparison between ancient and modern Rome.

“Rome must be considered as two cities, the ancient and the modern; no two ideas can be more distinct from each other than that of the glory and grandeur of ancient, and that of the glory and grandeur of modern Rome, founded on different principles, obtained by opposite means, leading to contrary results, and exhibited by dissimilar monuments. Of ancient Rome, the principle was human glory; the means, war and terror; the result, the slavery of nations; the monuments, triumphal arches, amphitheatres, thermal halls, and temples reared to deities that were no other than personified vices. Of modern Rome, the principle was the service of the true God; the means, the extension of the true faith; the result, the civilization of the world; the monuments, churches, religious retreats, hospitals, museums, libraries.”

P. 285.

LORD BYRON

AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

May 4, 1828.

Then cease to prompt the vices you decry,
As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die.

EVEN the general diffusion of literature has its evils, and the schoolmaster may be too much foris-familiated; as if to convince us that no human acquisition can be of unmingled good, and to make us tolerant of those more cautious and sluggish spirits who are slow to recognise improvement in change. Of these evils, a principal one is the wider and more unobstructed progress of cant. A sentiment uttered in the terseness of modern phraseology is scattered far and wide, and by a Procrustean operation, that which it will not fit is forcibly fitted to it, and the victim subjected to cruel and unmerited torture. Thus the real abuse of private unreservedness and social confidence, recently prevalent, has given rise to a fastidious delicacy as to disclosures of a domestic character that is carried to an excess which threatens to expunge the department of minute biography altogether from the ranks of literature, and to substitute mere transcripts from the tombstone in its place. Of this morbid reaction, Mr. Hunt has especial reason to complain, for owing to its vogue, his character and his book have been assailed with all the vituperation due to the highest moral delinquency, and a very innocuous, as well as very entertaining contribution to biography read, (for it is generally read,) in the same distinguishing spirit with which King James loved the treason and hated the traitor, or at best with the salvos which a lady makes for her decorum while she at once reads a luscious book and cries shame on the writer. This high-flown indignation against violated confidence is not only exaggerated but misdirected. It is forgotten that personal and family anecdotes are not selected by authors as most congenial to their own taste, but as most suited to that of the public; that he who writes to live must write to please,

and that if honourable feeling and refined delicacy are sacrificed in the attempt, the fault rests mainly with that public, and to it collectively should all the obloquy be directed. However the poor authors have been made the sufferers, and Mr. Hunt, whose work comes forth at rather an inauspicious time, seems emphatically destined to be the scape-goat. Satire and invective, in poetry and prose, have each been discharged against him with unsparing fury, and the epithets *ingrate*, *betrayed*, *slanderer*, must have become as familiar to his ears as "household words." Against all this abuse Mr. Hunt had a complete and effectual defence, although he has unfortunately preferred a very impotent and bad one : his vindication is this :—that although writing under the most manifest and indeed avowed influence of spleen and resentment, Mr. Hunt says absolutely nothing to lower the character of Lord Byron in the esteem of any one who derived his impression of it from his own writings. Even against the implicit reception of what he does say, he warns you by letting you see how angry he is, by almost making a parade of the *scænum in cornu* through which he tries to gore. But Lord Byron has been his own biographer, and that the more faithfully because undesignedly ; so that I think no one who reads his works however superficially will have to learn from any other source that the character of the man was a compound of caprice, vanity, petulance, sensuality, vindictiveness — in short the result of a radically bad education operating upon a temperament requiring the greatest disciplinary control. Mr. Hunt has done no more than exhibit some striking instances of these qualities, and gives the avouch of an eyewitness to what we knew well enough without one. Mr. Hunt's defence rests on this basis, and I think firmly. He however prefers not only a weaker one, but one of the very worst he could have chosen ; for whatever his own creed may be concerning the nature and value of obligations between man and man, the public will not be *metaphysicked* into an admission that he who supports another and his family without hope of remuneration or any other intelligible motive of self interest, and who follows up his generosity by large pecuniary advances, is not to all intents and purposes a benefactor, and entitled to all the immunities belonging to the character. The clumsy and swaggering style in which this matter is discussed, constitutes the very worst part of Mr. Hunt's book. He has however exhibited many redeeming in-

stances of an amiable and grateful disposition to other persons, particularly Mr. Shelley, and we must only suppose that Lord Byron was an adept in the perverse art known to some, of converting even kindness into offence, and provoking enmities where others with more suavity of manner and at far less cost, excite gratitude. Besides the cause already assigned, many others might be suggested why Mr. Hunt's book would receive a very unmerciful weight of abuse. In the first place, Lord Byron's recent death, and that in circumstances of so affecting a kind, and so much tending to obscure his errors and emblazon his merits—next, the formidable array of contemporary talent who are not very ceremoniously criticised among the "Contemporaries;" and lastly and not least, the triumphant, reckless wantonness with which Mr. Hunt revels in all the grotesque imaginings which have opened the flood-gates to such torrents of ridicule upon the "Cockney School." These have been weapons both for the weightier onslaught of invective and the lighter missiles of satire, that have been eagerly caught at and unsparingly employed.

The pleasantest part of this book is the account of Mr. Hunt's boyhood. I have before remarked and endeavoured to explain the causes of the superiority of most writers to themselves when treating of their juvenile adventures. Of his contemporaries, Mr. Shelley is the favourite both for his intellectual and social qualities. But the quotations from his poems are too abstract and metaphysical for general acceptance. Those from Keats pleased me much more: there are some passages in them of exquisite beauty. The length of this critique would excuse a quotation, were it not perhaps the more necessary as a set off to so much of my own sentiments.

"Voltaire, in an essay written by himself in the English language, has said of Milton, in a passage which would do honour to our best writers, that when the poet saw the *Adamo* of Andreini at Florence, he 'pierced through the absurdity of the plot to the hidden majesty of the subject.' It may be said of himself that he pierced through the conventional majesty of a great many subjects, to the hidden absurdity of the plot. He could not build as he could destroy. He was the merry general of an army of pioneers. But he laid the axe to a heap of savage abuses; pulled the corner-stones out of dungeons and inquisitions; bowed and mocked the most tyrannical absurdities

out of countenance, and raised one prodigious peal of laughter at superstition from Naples to the Baltic. He was the first man who got the power of opinion and common sense openly recognised as a great reigning authority; and who made the acknowledgment of it a point of wit and cunning with those who had hitherto thought that they had the world to themselves. I admired him more then, than I do now; I thought he had more imagination, and a deeper insight into all the wants and capabilities of mankind. But though I think less of him as one who understands all they want, I think now, more than ever, that he cannot be too highly appreciated as one who understood what they want not. " P. 391-2.

LIFE OF COLUMBUS, BY W. IRVING.

May 26, 1828.

MR. IRVING has not been altogether happy in the selection of a subject for entering upon an untried career of authorship, and his courage in provoking a comparison with one of the most finished performances of one of the most eminent prose writers our language has produced, has been followed by a result calculated rather to affix upon it the charge of temerity. The narrative, though sustained by a pure, scholar-like style, and embellished with much striking and graphical description, is but an extension—a hammering out, and consequently a weakening, of Robertson's. The celebrity of Columbus; the notoriety of his discoveries through the permanent changes they have wrought in the history, as well as in the geography of the world; and perhaps more than all, the remoteness of his time excluding the possibility of new lights being at this day shed upon his history; all these circumstances have rendered the fault of repetition almost inevitable. Mr. Irving however claims the praise of originality for having enriched his work from various documents inaccessible to his predecessors. If the fact be so, and that Dr. Robertson did not wilfully reject, but was actually uninformed of what Mr. Irving has so eagerly caught at, we must transfer our admiration from his judgment in selecting, to

his good fortune in lighting upon every thing that was really valuable to his purpose. For it seems to me that the modern biographer's supplemental stock of information consists chiefly of uninteresting minutæ, rather calculated to arraign himself of the malice perperse of book-making, than to enhance our admiration of his hero, or substantially improve our acquaintance with him. Thus the work abounds in prolix dissertations upon questions either of no general interest, or capable of being decided by a single reference. I consider that concerning the birth place of Columbus to partake of both these characters. To the British reader, at least, who can pretend to no compatriotism with him, it must surely be of little concern whether he was born at Genoa or some other Italian town; and if it be of any moment, surely he has himself put the matter out of doubt, for in his last will, an occasion when men of even lax morality tell truth, he affirms himself to be a Genoese. Yet with this clincher in reserve, Mr. Irving debates the matter through many a tedious page before he settles it. He is equally elaborate upon the question of the "Admiral's" lineage—though this too is surely unimportant: Columbus's fame rendered him independent of ancestral support, and his progenitors, whether patrician or plebeian, must be equally forgotten in the blaze of their decendant's glory. It is mainly for these blemishes of prolixity and minuteness, that it must be admitted, that giving him credit for much research and for the full exercise of his peculiar powers of graceful and harmonious diction, Mr. Irving has hardly sustained—certainly not advanced, his reputation by his biographical work.

Having specified the faults, it is but fair to enumerate some of the merits of this memoir. It contains some very sweet and touching descriptions of the amenity and luxurious repose of the primitive Indian life, passed as it was, in a climate of a fertility and among scenes of a loveliness to prompt and harmonize with such a mode of existence; and the contrast the natives found in their subjugation to rapacious and cruel taskmasters is no less affectingly exhibited. But it is in the analysis of the character of Columbus himself that his recent historian evinces the highest powers. The process by which superstition, in itself an enfeebling and controlling influence, is converted, by its infusion into a mind of lofty and enthusiastic stamp, into a stimulus to the most perilous enterprise; the visionary confidence of Columbus in his being himself the person prefi-

gured in various prophecies current at the time, as the discoverer of a new world and the rescuer of the holy land from the infidels, sustaining him above a pressure and complication of calamity which must have quickly crushed the most heroic spirit if buoyed by human hopes only—all these points of character are finely developed, and so far from exciting any of that contemptuous pity which we feel for common superstition, that of Columbus inspires us with the more reverent and exalted ideas of his character. With his firm reliance upon Providence, he is never wanting to himself. All the aids which the greatest natural sagacity, the most unwearied observation, the constant comparison of analogies can supply, are unceasingly employed by him in the realisation of his sublime conceptions; and thus he has the transcendent merit of accomplishing by human means, results on such a scale of magnificence as that he himself, astonished at their vastness, with the truest christian piety and humility, is fain to ascribe them to supernatural agency.

After enlarging upon the practice of the invaders to attempt the securing of their conquests by the erection of fortresses, M. Irving goes on :

“In this way was the yoke of servitude fixed upon the island, and its thralldom effectually ensured. Deep despair now fell upon the natives when they found a perpetual task inflicted on them, enforced at stated and frequently recurring periods. Weak and indolent by nature, unused to labour of any kind, and brought up in the untasked idleness of their soft climate and their fruitful groves, death itself seemed preferable to a life of toil and anxiety. They saw no end to this harassing evil, which had so suddenly fallen upon them ; no escape from its all pervading influence ; no prospect of return to that roving independence and ample leisure, so dear to the wild inhabitants of the forest. The pleasant life of the island was at an end ; the dream in the shade by day ; the slumber during the sultry noontide heat by the fountain or the stream, or under the spreading palm tree ; and the song, the dance, and the game in the mellow evening, when summoned to their simple amusements by the rude Indian drum. They were now obliged to grope day by day, with bending body and anxious eye, along the borders of their rivers, sifting the sands for the grains of gold which grew every day more scanty ; or to labour in their fields beneath the fervour of a

tropical sun, to raise food for their taskmasters, or to produce the vegetable tribute imposed upon them. They sunk to sleep weary and exhausted at night, with the certainty that the next day was but to be a repetition of the same toil and suffering. Or if they occasionally indulged in their national dances, the ballads to which they kept time were of a melancholy and plaintive character. They spoke of the times that were past before the white men had introduced sorrow and slavery, and weary labour among them; and they rehearsed pretended prophecies, handed down from their ancestors, foretelling the invasion of the Spaniards; that strangers should come into their island, clothed in apparel, with swords capable of cleaving a man asunder at a blow, under whose yoke their posterity should be subdued. These ballads, or areytos, they sang with mournful tunes and doleful voices, bewailing the loss of their liberty and their painful servitude. * ”

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE.

(SECOND SERIES.)

May 25, 1828.

THIS is another graft of fiction upon an historic stock, and that stock being of sufficient antiquity to leave the juncture of the authentic and imaginary imperceptible, that great difficulty of blending them into an harmonious whole is very skilfully surmounted. This story (for there is but one,) is very superior to any of those which composed the first series, and I think principally because it is longer. Sir Walter Scott does not succeed in compression, nor I should think can any writer do so who adopts his plan of making the characters develop themselves and the story by the sentiments they utter and the actions they perform. When he is cooped up within a narrow space, his motions are sometimes awkward, and his efforts painful; but when he takes room to soar, his flight is always vigorous

* Peter Martyr. Decad. 3. Lib. 9.

and majestic. The second Series of the "Chronicles" is unsurpassed in the glowing and discriminated colours which infuse life, and spirit and individuality into the characters, and the soul-stirring details of the strife and conflict, whether corporeal or intellectual, by which their respective energies are called forth, bespeak no less the power of a master. The scene-painting here, is equally delightful, though not so diversified as usual : it is not so conversant with the natural landscape—the forest, the mountain or the torrent, as with the artificial creations of man—the venerable church—the ancient burgh,—the council chamber, and the costume of the personages. The portrait of Robert the Third, both personal and mental, is unsurpassable, and indeed you rise from the perusal of the entire with all that feeling of freshness one experiences from the examination of a cabinet of finely preserved antique paintings.

After all, this tale has some, and no slight blemishes. The hero is even worse chosen than is common with the author. In general Scott's heroes are well bred, well looking young persons who perform their share in the achievement of their mistresses' hearts and persons in a very exemplary style ; but Henry Smith, besides being of a mechanical and vulgar calling, is too much of a ruffian and brawler to be mated with the very sentimental casuist who fills the rôle of heroine. So that the nursling of the white doe, notwithstanding his hereditary timidity, engages much more of the reader's favour. It is indeed the obscurity that surrounds those persons' fates, and the magnificent arbitrement which decides them, that gives to the winding up of the last volume its very intense interest. The first volume I think rather heavy : the second, although the plottings of a very finely represented knot of conspirators give it some animation, does not enchain the mind ; but the catastrophe of the Duke of Rothsay and the combat of the clans in the third, are the triumph of narrative. The other, and as far as it goes, more grievous fault of this tale, is its episode of polemics and of the reforming priest who is their organ. Sir Walter Scott loves controversy, as far as attacks on the ancient religion can be called so, and he handles the subject not only with shameful ignorance but with consummate heaviness. His "Monastery" foundered on this rock, and so would the present work had it more than slightly grazed it. Upon the whole I agree with the reviewer in the "Examiner," that the Second Series of the "Chronicles" is entitled to about a middle place

among Scott's writings—as much below the best, as above the worst. I had a very pretty scenic sketch marked for transcription, but the volume is not at hand and I cannot keep my letter open.

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER.

June 1, 1828.

THIS is a summary of Scottish history from the earliest period to the union of the crowns, addressed to the capacity of a child of six years old. This adaptation to the very juvenile reader is however effected by a very different process from the ordinary method in which the *good-boy* books are manufactured, or by employing the plainest and shortest words and the most pedestrian and unadorned style. It appears from the preface, that Sir Walter did originally intend conforming to the popular notion, but the preference of Master Littlejohn for something better soon induced him to change his plan; and indeed a very sudden elevation of writing is clearly perceptible about the middle of the first volume, and continues to the close. Thus does Sir Walter Scott enrol himself among those preceptors who strew the thorny paths of instruction with flowers, and impress the memory by awakening the imagination. In these little volumes, all the authenticated passages of Scottish history partaking of the wonderful and romantic (and in these the annals of that nation abound,) are selected as pivots upon which the less impressive matter (as the chronology, the succession of the kings and the political narrative) is made to revolve; and upon this plan a work of exquisite finish has been completed; admirable for that simple perspicuity which marks the best style of the author, and abounding in those traits of good nature and innocent humour which so often make us love the man as much as we admire the writer.

In the last of Scott's works under review in these letters, I had occasion to remark how disastrous the contact with religious or polemical subjects was always to him, and that remark seems to have been dictated by a prescience of the confirmation it was to receive in his next production. The account of the catholic worship

contained in these volumes is absolutely disgraceful to any writer of the nineteenth century—save and except those whose unblushing reiteration of convicted falsehood secures them by their actual degradation from all chances of a lower fall. When I consider it, I am tempted to cancel all I have ever written commendatory of the author's moral qualities, and to give that niggardly and qualified admission of his talents which a conviction at once of their existence and their prostitution would dictate. Whether those misrepresentations of the ancient religion result from ignorance or corruption, they are equally astonishing. If from ignorance, how strange is it that an author upon whose pages all antiquity seems to delight in pouring her choicest and rarest records, should be uninformed of the nature of that theology which intermingles itself with almost them all. That the faithful and glowing delineator of the language, costume and manners of our forefathers should be in Cimmerian darkness as to their religion—that spiritual agent which so paramously influenced their conduct and character! If we assume the only remaining alternative, that Sir Walter Scott is not blind but wilfully shuts out the light to pamper with calumny the appetite of an odious, corrupt and besotted party, we are forced upon the reflection upon what a melancholy debasement talent may be condemned to, and how much of atrocity is mingled with that debasement, when we see that talent exerted in polluting the pure and ingenuous mind of childhood. This is as astonishing a solution of the fact as the first, and so much more painful to admit, that we must cling to the other alternative, though that too is difficult enough to conceive.

The laudatory opinions upon the structure and execution of this little book are given with the more confidence that they are sustained by the expressed sentiments of Maria Edgeworth.

The consequence of letting my *notitiæ* fall into arrear, is that no circulating-library books can be quoted. Such is the case now.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

(THIRD SERIES.)

June 11, 1828.

"GERVAS SKINNER," and "Cousin William" are the two tales comprised in this last and incomparably best of Mr. Theodore Hook's works. The first illustrates the "pound folly" of "penny wisdom" in the character and adventures of a hero, neither altogether a knave nor quite a fool, yet going through all the chastisement justly due to the one, with the ridicule commonly attaching to the other, as the penalty of some short-sighted meannesses. Mr. Hook has committed two very palpable faults in the structure of this story, admirable as it is in many particulars. The first is, that he disproportions the sufferings of his hero to his deserts, so that any good-natured reader must feel his sense of ridicule quite absorbed in pity towards the close of poor Gervas's career of disasters. The second is, that these disasters are brought about by an agent such as in nature would hardly be competent to effect them. Mrs. Fuggleston is much too coarse a being, and her artifices too clumsy, to impose upon any man of even less tact and shrewdness than her victim, little as he was endued with these attributes. Mr. Hook was probably led into the second fault by his love for broad farce, or else by the opportunity he had for introducing a living character in this personation, by availing himself of which, he was obliged to sacrifice resemblance to general nature to the fidelity of individual caricature. For the error first pointed out, he has made atonement at the close by giving the fortunes of his hero a favourable issue. With these deductions, the tale will give the utmost pleasure. The ingenious machinery by which every succeeding misfortune is dovetailed into its predecessor, and follows it naturally, yet unexpectedly, affords high evidence of the dramatic power which the author generally exhibits. The narrative too is well written and the characters perfectly individualised and consistent. It is however to the second story that Mr. Hook may proudly

refer as establishing not only his superiority to himself, but to almost any living novel-writer, and as referring us back to the classics of Fielding, Smollett, and the most celebrated expositors of nature, for competition or rivalry. Yet even in their faithful portraits, we shall not find anything serving as model to Mr. Hook's, or more nearly approaching them than one good resemblance will any other. The situation of life, costume and education of their characters are essentially different. In verisimilitude are they alike and perhaps equal. As in the tale first mentioned, Mr. Hook makes the incidents revolve round a hero, he has shown impartiality by making the fortunes of a young lady the mainspring which actuates all the machinery of this tale, and it is from the uncommon ability displayed in developing this character through all the faults of its earlier constitution, faults arising from neglected education and other unfavourable circumstances, to its ultimate depravation, that I am inclined to assign to him the very first rank amongst moral delineators. The machinery producing the natural sequence of events is still more admirable in this tale than in "Gervas Skinner;" not so much, perhaps, that it is constructed with greater art or managed with more dexterity, as that it is employed to illustrate a higher theme and to effectuate a deeper moral purpose. The whole *dramatis personæ* of this story, effectuating the incidents through their peculiarities of character, and these incidents reacting upon those peculiarities to show them in new but harmonious colours, all bespeak the very highest dramatic power.

HIGHWAYS AND BYE-WAYS.

(THIRD SERIES.)

June 8, 1828.

"STRIKE while the iron's hot," should be my motto with respect to the Literary Ephemerides to which Mr. Grattan is a contributor. for if the sentiments they excite are not perpetuated while they are fresh, they are very apt to fade into a general, vague impression

of approbation or the reverse, the grounds of which are utterly vanished and forgotten. Of the work under consideration, all I am now enabled to say is that it consists of the usual allotment of three 12mo. volumes containing perhaps a thousand pages;—that the “Conscript’s Bride” is the principal, if not the only tale upon which this millenary of pages is expended;—that this story exhibits situations of much power over the emotions of tenderness and pathos :—and that its intrigue, after being judiciously complicated, is evolved with a proper regard to probability, and no sacrifice of interest. This is a meagre reviewal, but I have the less reason to regret its scantiness, that I had a former very extended article in these letters upon Mr. Grattan’s rank as an author, very distinctly in my memory while perusing his last work, and that I found nothing in it to induce me to revoke anything I had there expressed. It is a curious instance of the different impressive powers of Theodore Hook and this writer, that every incident in the last novel of the former is fresh in my mind, while I only preserve these glimmering reminiscences of Mr. Grattan’s book which I subsequently read, that I have thus attempted to embody. I find on reference to my blotter that I made an extract and I prepare to give it place.

“ The secret is, (of the decline of the vogue of Ghost stories) that we have lost our faith in those charming superstitions; the materialised enjoyments of the time no longer sympathize with the phantoms of romance; and the author who would weave a web of magic, in which he has no belief, must manage with a heavy touch the vapoury essences of fairy land. I confess myself to observe the change with regret; for I consider superstition, in all its modified forms, to be widely different from ignorance, inasmuch as it has been shared by many of the wisest and most learned; and I look on it as one of the safest minor means for the government of what must ever be a large portion of mankind. A superstition of some sort, seems a natural want of the mind; and the history of human nature proves the continual changes of the object, but no abatement of the principle. But a grosser species of enchantment than spirits or genii, is required to charm the incredulity of the sceptic world we move in; and the austerity of knowledge, which disdains the array of goblin impositions, is not proof against the dread of spectral agency, which religion sanctifies, and at which even philosophy involuntarily shudders.”

IRISH FAIRY LEGENDS.

June 16, 1828.

WHOEVER has been an attentive auditor of poor Pat's manner of "just telling his honour all about it," will at once recognise, and willingly attest the admirable accuracy with which Mr. Croker has caught the spirit of Irish narrative. The alternate predominance of the pathetic and the ludicrous; the contrasted simplicity and shrewdness; the frequent episode; the peculiar diction, studded with Hibernicisms of powerful import, either to convey indignation or contempt—those echoes of the sound to the sense, which are intelligible even to those who are ignorant of the language:—all those characteristics of a genuine Patlander's elocution in moments of high excitement, have been caught and transfused upon his canvas with admirable spirit and fidelity by Mr. Croker. With respect to the tales, the author has only the merit of selection, (no small one certainly), as I believe they are all familiar to the learned in faerie in this country. There are some of them, in which the *good people* act as friends and benefactors, that evolve a pleasant well written story. But the grand exhibition of the author's power is reserved for "Daniel O'Rourke", and notwithstanding its matchless absurdity, he must be a saturnine man indeed who can keep his countenance while perusing the dialogue between Daniel and the Eagle with the interjectional reflections of the former. I ought to have transcribed a paragraph from this clever little volume, of which a small specimen would convey a good idea, but neglected it, as I have latterly done so many useful things.

CAPTAIN POPANILLA.

June 20, 1828.

THIS was announced as an imitation of Gulliver's travels. I had not read many pages before I perceived what sort of imitation I was to expect, and as that expectation was not falsified, I read on the volume with great impatience and closed it in very high indignation at the impudence of the shallow impostor who could thus put forth his trashy tinsel as an imitation of Swift's massive bullion. This was my general impression of the book and its author; and all particular recollection has been long since absorbed in that. Has there indeed appeared any writer in any country, either before or since, who could produce anything similar to that marvellous model of dry humour, Gulliver? Where else shall we look for a work adapted to please all ages, and all tempers of mankind equally;—which the child and the unlettered may read with their fairy tales; and the scholar and man of the world, study with their philosophical and political essays? If I am asked to give a reason for this extraordinary unanimity respecting Gulliver's travels, the *single* one I should adduce, for many might be given, would be its most extraordinary verisimilitude. From the character of Lemuel Gulliver himself to the minutest incident that befalls him, (the first being admitted,) all is simple, natural and straight-forward. Like Archimedes, he requires but one lever. Grant him but that and you must be sceptic indeed if you are incredulous about the rest. Well might the seaman say he knew Gulliver very well for many years; and well might the Irish Bishop declare there were *some* things in the book he could not believe, so plausibly are the relater and his adventures made out. This natural base, beautified by imagination's groupings as its capital, will always delight while “nature to advantage drest” delights—that is while man continues to be man.

I made no extract from Captain Popanilla. Its style appeared to me quite made up of the modern flimsiness and dilution. Gulliver indeed!—*proh pudor!*

CONTINENTAL TRAVELLER'S ORACLE.

June 29, 1828.

A BOOK is always displeasing to me, in which I cannot discover the drift of the author, nor ascertain whether he is in jest or earnest in making his way to it. Such is the present. From its title, as well as some scarcely disguised transcripts, we might pronounce it to be intended as a satire upon Dr. Kitchener; but Mr. Wyse soon deserts his prototype and expatiates in an extensive field indeed of multifarious topics. I have never read more than a few quotations from the "Traveller's Oracle;" yet from these I should almost decide that it has not been happily "shown up" by its namesake, which seems only to have caught those grosser and more palpable extravagancies which strike every eye; whereas the perfection of mimicry is delicately to touch and deepen those shades of the ridiculous which were originally too faint to arrest attention; or by some minute perversion of a phrase, or interpolation of a word, to alter a passage's entire meaning, and extract the ludicrous and burlesque out of good sense and gravity itself. The present work, as I have said, embracing an extensive variety of matter, is not very easily criticised. It is exceedingly uneven both as to style and sentiment. The writer is happy, even in his light bantering way of treating of political institutions, because upon these he has evidently bestowed much attention, and here he feels himself at home. His enumeration too of the impediments which sometimes suddenly start up to frustrate the long-planned journey are very ludicrously distressful, and are I believe, to a certain extent, constantly experienced. For the impersonation of the fictitious medical author, the writer had evidently Lockhart's "Peter Morris" in his eye, but Dr. Eldon falls far short of that most animated production that has escaped from any brain since Pallas walked in full panoply out of Jupiter's. I think the cardinal fault of "the Continental Traveller's Oracle" is treating all subjects, grave or gay, important or insignificant, with the same sneering insincerity.

It requires a vast fund of both wit and humour to sustain a sneer effectually, and Mr. Wyse seems to me to be very scantily provided with either quality.

Upon the whole I think I am quite safe in pronouncing this as well written and entertaining a book as nine tenths of its contemporaries. It makes the author's friends at least, laugh excessively, and every one knows the story of Molière and his old woman.

I have made no extract and regret it.

LETTERS

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF IRELAND.

June 27, 1828.

SOME time ago I read a pamphlet by Mr. Henry Lambert with this no very attractive title, but to the reading of which I was moved by considerations of politeness. While it was fresh on my mind, I considered it a clear well-written collection, but I am at this distance of time, utterly incapable of giving anything like an account of its design or course of reasoning. I believe he rather suggests specific remedies for specific evils which are pointed out, than enters into the great panacea of all. I remember one curious opinion he broaches: it is, that the fecundity of the lower Irish women is owing to the absence of strong sexual passion in the men. This may be all very true, but both fact and cause struck me with the air of a novelty and *non sequitur*. But why talk of overgrown population when none of our soil is half cultivated, and so much of it not at all so? In this land of contradictions, population superabounds, while the soil is uncultivated, and we feed other nations with our produce, while we ourselves are starving! O! Catholic Emancipation, shall we ever see thee? shall we ever say with Virgil's Shepherd,

Quæ sera, tamen, respexit inertem?

We want internal concord—it would bring it: we want external capital—it would bring it, and so at once regenerate us. O you selfish, monopolising corruptionists, what have you not to answer for, and when and where will you be made to answer for it?

THE CROPPY.

Oct. 25.

IF Mr. Banim perseveres in his present career of improvement; if his next novel shall exceed "the Croppy" as much as this does all its predecessors, then must he, at once, take his rank as first of the emulators of Scott; but it would be difficult to imagine any rank to which such progress will not enable him ultimately to attain. Heretofore Mr. Banim reminded one of a rough, uncouth, rawboned compatriot of his own, full of muscle and sinew, entering the arena of literary pugilism without skill, science, or grace; relying on "brute force" alone; hitting at random; often missing his blow and always awkwardly aiming it; falling inelegantly; rising elaborately; and vanquished by far inferior energy, under more dexterous management. He is now more an adept in the science of his profession. He has added some grace to his vigour, and improved the latter quality itself by submitting it to a course of discipline. Accordingly that pervading want of tact; those violent and unnatural contrasts; that complexity of plot and clumsy disentanglement; and that absolute ignorance of the tone and usages of good society, which disfigured all this author's former productions, are fast disappearing. When felt, they are felt as blemishes amply redeemed by great beauties, and not as heretofore, as glaring, revolting deformities, for which no emanations of untutored genius could afford a compensation.

Yet, although Mr. Banim is improved, rapidly and wonderfully improved, he is still far removed not only from the ideal goal of perfection, but even from that approach to it which our standard novelists have made. In that most essential department of his art, the weaving and development of a plot, he is exceedingly unskilful; and his works are therefore defaced by the introduction of half supernatural agents who contrive to be in all places at all times, ready to cut the knots which the author wants the skill to untie. In Mr. Banim's anxiety to give an accurate portrait of the lower

Irish character, he allows a prolixity to their narratives which is very faulty. Talking, for talking sake, is quite inadmissible in a novel, which should be all either rapid summary, or action. The opinion I formerly expressed as to the stronghold of Mr. Banim's talents is quite confirmed by the "Croppy." It is in the delineation of high-wrought energy, of violence, revenge and the stir and collision of the darker passions, that his mastery over our minds consists. The battle of Ross and capture of Wexford are two admirable specimens in this line, but the author's masterpiece, and a performance which in some parts may enter the lists against any existing composition for intensely exciting power, is the burning of the smith's house and the death of his son. It is absolutely harrowing, and had it been a little contracted, might be called perfect. But Mr. Banim has yet to learn that the judicious, practised author will never seek to keep the reader's mind long wound up to its highest pitch : he knows that if he do not speedily slacken the string, the peg will turn of itself, and his conclusion be rendered ineffectual by the relaxation.

I have made no quotation. Alas ! how often does the violation of that good rule reproach me in these pages !

MRS. HUTCHINSON'S MEMOIRS.

Nov. 10, 1828.

MRS. LUCY APSLEY having from childhood manifested a degree of gravity, decorum and addiction to study, very unusual at her years and in her sex, received that masculine education for which nature seems to have formed her, and at fifteen years old was what we should call a pedant, but what in that illiterate age must have appeared a prodigy of wisdom and learning. About this time Providence threw in her way a congenial spirit in the person of Mr. John Hutchinson, a staid and sober young gentleman ; like herself, preferring his book to the levities incidental to their thoughtless period of life. Kindred tastes soon begat mutual affection, and before their united ages amounted to seven and thirty years, Mr. John Hutchin-

son made Mrs. Lucy Apsley bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. For some years this godly pair seem to have gone on pretty much like our own "serious;" but presently the outbreak of the civil war moved the same John Hutchinson to unsheathe the sword of the Lord and of Gideon against popery, prelacy and erastianism, and after sharing in some of the reverses with which "God tried his chosen," he finally was appointed governor of Nottingham castle, and removing his family thither, it became the scene of most of the incidents detailed in these volumes. Colonel Hutchinson was also a member of the Long Parliament and a subscriber to the death warrant of Charles I. Now, although I have spoken of him and his lady rather derisively, I really believe them both to have been conscientious estimable people. His republicanism was so sincere as to have been proof against the temptations of Cromwell, and to have made him an object of constant suspicion and jealousy to that ruler. At the Restoration, Hutchinson was summoned to London and his life saved by the influence and address of Sir Allan Apsley, his wife's relative. He seems however only to have exchanged a sentence of immediate, for one of lingering death, for he was shortly after taken from his own house and confined in a castle on the sea shore, where he soon fell a victim to every species of hardship and privation. His wife survived him, and of her too, it is but fair to say that however her manners may have been tainted by the pedantry of her education, her mind retained its feminine mould, and she fulfilled the duties of an exemplary wife to the last.

In my opinion the great value of Mrs. Hutchinson's memoirs is their showing by means of a few figures and a small frame, a more minute and vivid sketch of the horrors of civil war than any of our more comprehensive histories could descend to. Her husband, though on the gaining side, was totally ruined in property; his house frequently broken into and pillaged, and his family kept in a state of almost constant agitation and alarm for several successive years. Whatever could embitter life seems to have been endured at this period by the English people, and with scarcely any of the compensatory gleams of hope or enjoyment which occasionally flit athwart the deepest gloom. Such a work is a good lesson to extend our passive obedience—to

"—Rather bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of."

But it has been ridiculously overpraised. The Edinburgh Review, in one of its few lenient moods, has loaded it with eulogy, and the poor Editor falls into a perfect ecstasy whenever he meets with a passage written the least above the ordinary level. A long foolish note is the price we are always charged for one of these elevations.

CAPTAIN ROCK.

Nov. 14, 1828.

THIS is a reperusal and excites no remark different from those already recorded in these pages as the result of a first impression.

"Captain Rock" is the splendid emanation of a polished genius veiling high-wrought indignation under the semblance of playful sarcasm and harmless irony.

PELHAM, AND THE DISOWNED.

Dec. 16, 1828.

I REVIEW these two novels together, because they are by the same hand ; constructed on the same plan ; marked by the same peculiarities, and therefore liable to the same criticism.

Both these novels are put forward as representations of high life, and the writer by his sneers at his predecessors in the same track, and the supercilious manner in which he asserts his own claims, evidently intends that he should be considered the first who has fairly shown "the glass of fashion and the mould of form." But his ambition does not rest here : he aims at the pathetic and the terrible also, and indites page after page of metaphysics which those who understand may admire. With respect to his analysis of manners, he is, I believe, quite correct in making ease and composure the best criterion of good-breeding ; but I am sure he is equally wrong in representing the cool deliberate perpetration of the most

galling affronts as one of its characteristics. He probably confounds an individual with a species—the vulgar error ; and having seen some one young man of authentic stamp brutally usurp the seat by a lady which had been vacated for an instant by another person ; or impudently lead out a pre-engaged partner to dance ; he promulgates those offences as the distinctive features of a class. Yet it is impossible these can be matters of general occurrence : society must first be decomposed into its elements, and the novelist who ascribes them to an order by ascribing them to one of its representatives, must be pronounced the utterer of rash judgments. Yet it is in the display of the levities of gay life that the author's merit consists. There seems to be something congenial to his own mind, as far as the glimpses he opens to us enable us to read it, in the affected disdain and cool superciliousness of the pure votary of fashion. When he grows energetic, which he is fond of doing, he sinks into mere raving rant ; and when he gets metaphysical, to which he is more prone still, he mystifies himself into pitiable nonsense. These novels may take about a middle place between “ Granby ” and “ Vivian Grey,” and contain something like an amalgam of their respective styles. The lighter passages are perhaps somewhat superior to Mr. Lyster's. The characters are better discriminated and rather develop the story than depend on it, a merit to which Mr. Lyster cannot prefer much claim. But the serious portions are in a much greater degree inferior in execution to “ Vivian Grey,” though they have the advantage of conducing to a definite end. On the whole I should pronounce the “ Author of Pelham,” whoever he is, * to be a smart, secondary personage, abounding in his own good graces, and angling for ours by pretending not to care for them. But whatever conceit may whisper, he will turn out only one of the annuals that flaunt for a season on the literary parterre. There is nothing vital or staminous about him, and if the flower be preserved at all it must be simply by succession of produce.

* Mr. Bulwer.

REUBEN APSLEY.

Nov. 30, 1828.

MR. HORACE SMITH should be held out as a warning to all young authors of talent to trust to their own resources and avoid mimicry. He seems absolutely to have written himself down by it. Not only is his original composition deteriorated, as might be expected, but, what is extraordinary, the imitations themselves are becoming spiritless and ineffectual. When we reflect that a vast proportion, if not the whole of our ideas and sentiments, are acquired from others, we shall be forcibly struck with the different effect upon the intellect, of treasuring them unaltered in the memory, and of extracting their substance merely, while we modify their form to accommodate it to the magazine wherein they are to be repositied. One might suppose that there would not be much difference in the result of these two processes, yet by the one a man becomes what is called, and justly called, an original thinker and writer; (for as we cannot create materials, all originality consists in novel combinations;) while by the other process, he turns out a mere mimic; a servile follower in some other person's lead, and is incapable of finding his course, where the bearings are not laid down for him.

These remarks are suggested by "Reuben Apsley," a counterfeit coinage bearing the "Waverley" impress, and one of such very decided mediocrity as leaves us little anxiety for Mr. Smith's speedy return to the foundery. The scene is laid at the time of Monmouth's invasion. The hero is at that period peacefully domesticated at the country seat of his uncle and patron, a retired merchant. Like Waverley, he has a friend in the insurgent army who instigates him ardently and successfully to embark in the same cause. As in "Waverley," after the defeat of his party, there is a high reward offered for his apprehension, when he assumes various disguises and encounters many hairbreadth perils, before finally effecting his escape; and once more like Waverley, he becomes eventually reconciled to the government; marries, and subsides happily into a quiet country

gentleman. This trite tale is unfolded with remarkable prolixity and heaviness, and notwithstanding, such is the paucity of its incident and so little the relief it receives from either dialogue or description, that the number of volumes allotted to the modern novel could not be eked out without the superaddition of a second story, hanging loosely indeed upon the main one, and consisting of a most frantic, unreadable journal of the hero's father from the period of his having been cast, with his wife and daughter, upon a solitary island, until his destitution and madness. That any author should persuade himself that an entire volume of avowedly insane ravings should be read because he wrote them, argues a happy supply of confidence. Had the achievement been practicable, I think I would have had to boast of its accomplishment, as I scarcely ever *skip*; but it conquered me. To comprise all in a word, "Reuben Apsley" is a lamentable failure.

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER.

(SECOND SERIES.)

Dec. 7, 1828.

THESE volumes take up where the first series left off—at the union of the crowns, and conclude with that of the parliaments of England and Scotland. If they are not quite so entertaining as their predecessors, it is the fault of Sir Walter's materials and not of his treatment of them. He has advanced from the feudal ages; the period of romantic tradition, of heroic individual exploit, of devotedness, generosity, lawlessness and cruelty; to the age of steam printing-presses, mechanical warfare, comfort, selfishness and money-making. He has exchanged, in short, the era which it is delightful to read of, but which must have been frightful to live in, for one in which we can live tolerably enough, but which will scarcely furnish one incident to the romance writer of a hundred years hence. Yet is the period last commemorated by Sir Walter, not wholly unfruitful of these romantic incidents which he invests with such an indescribable charm, nor are they much less agreeable in their un-

adorned truth, for our having before met them, embellished by the same hand with all the resources of invention. The heroic Montrose is almost as interesting, when he stands forth, a solitary, historic portrait, as when he appeared grouped with so many other admirable figures—the inimitable Dalgetty not forgotten; and the “Bonnie Dundie” fights the battle of Drumclog with our sympathies nearly as much enlisted under his banner, as when we enjoyed his society at the spirit-stirring scene of the Tillietudlem breakfast. Indeed the publication of this little work discovers this further merit in Scott’s former writings, that in blending together history and fiction, he never sacrifices the former, or perverts it into a subserviency to its associate. The two constituents are exquisitely interwoven, to be sure, but the province of the one, never invaded by the other.

We may expect more of these tales, and, to me at least, they shall be right welcome; for if sometimes unequal to himself, Sir Walter Scott is always superior to every other contemporary writer.

No extract—alas! alas!

ANQUETIL.

LOUIS XIV ET LE RÉGENT.

Dec. 29, 1828.

THESE light French memoirs are not less useful than entertaining. They illustrate history, and often by a single anecdote enable us to arrive at the core of those political movements of which the other only presents the surface. They are to history what the light irregular troops are to an army: they deviate from the great road and pick up such stragglers as are out of its tract, and inaccessible to the heavier troops. The connexion between political memoirs and the more regular history is especially close in the French annals for the eighteenth century and half the preceding; so much were politics then mingled with intrigue and gallantry, and so much did the machinery of the state receive its impulse and regulation from the toilet and the boudoir.

Of the very interesting work under consideration, the writer whose name it bears, had little more than the task of compilation. It is a cento from the writings of many contemporaries. The Duc de St. Simon has been by far the largest and most important contributor. To copious extracts from his memoirs are added occasional citations from the voluminous puerilities of Dangeau; the sensible correspondence of Mad. de Maintenon; the more graceful trifling of Mad. de Sévigné; the blunt unsoftened disclosures of the Duchess of Orleans, and from the works of several less noted authorities. I think that after weighing the testimony of so many witnesses, dissenting upon minor points but agreed upon the one, it might have been a fairly debateable question with the father of a family of the times, whether he best consulted his child's morals in consigning it at once to a brothel, or in procuring it a place at court. In the former case, such moral qualities as were previously implanted and could survive the habitual sacrifice of chastity, might possibly be preserved; but the pestilential atmosphere of this abominable court was deadly to every species of virtuous principle. The surrender of all that was respectable in character or dignified in conduct, was the only road to the favour of a wretch whom servility, by making him forget he was a man, converted at last into a very monster. To the generality of this rule there appears to have been *one* exception, and as far as the evidence of these memoirs goes, *but* one. This was the Duc de St. Simon himself, the close observer and keen satirist of the corruption which surrounded him, while his own character received no farther taint from its influence, than a severity of estimating motives, and an acrimony in unveiling them, which must have been the unavoidable result of his position. He appears, indeed, another Juvenal, the unsparing castigator and perhaps too open exposé of vices from which his own exemption secured him against any danger of retaliation. The other contributory authors are rather adduced for the purpose of authenticating more favourable versions of M. de St. Simon's disclosures than his severity will adopt, than to supply much of what is original.

Louis XIV. was born in 1638, and ascended the throne three years later. His mother, Anne of Austria, was nominally regent in his minority, but the reins of government were held by Cardinal Mazarin. Louis was married to a princess of Spain, whom he survived many years, and who perhaps, feeling her influence over-

borne by that of successive mistresses, appears to have taken little part in state affairs. The most remarkable of the King's mistresses were, Mesdames de la Vallière and Montespan. When he approached the age of fifty he formed a connexion with Mad. de Maintenon to whose influence every rival quickly succumbed. Whether this connexion had the sanction of a private marriage or not, is doubtful, but the weight of evidence seems strongly to support the affirmative. The early years of Louis were happy in his internal government, and prosperous, perhaps glorious, abroad, but he survived his good fortune, and in his declining years, the defeat of his armies and the impoverishment of his treasury, placed his crown itself more than once in jeopardy. He outlived the two dauphins, his son and grandson, the latter of whom is represented as a most promising prince; and at his own death, in 1717, was succeeded by his great grandson Louis XV. The disposition of Louis seems to have been originally inclined to virtue; but power, absolute even over that great controller of arbitrary sway, public opinion, and the depraving effects of the base servility which always awaited on him, soon destroyed the moral sense itself. Hence the intense selfishness, the reckless prodigality, and inconsiderate cruelty which marked his latter years, and made him the scourge and detestation, as he had once been the idol, of his people.

The most distinguished generals of this reign were Condé, Turenne, Boufflers, Catinat, and Villeroi; and the most celebrated statesmen, Colbert and Louvois. I subjoin a couple of extracts: one to do honour to the courtiers—the other to do honour to the King.

“ Dans l'histoire frivole d'une jeune fille séduite, on peut ne point omettre qu'elle donna son nom à un ornement de tête que les dames ont conservé. Le vent détacha sa coiffure dans une partie de chasse; elle se la fit attacher avec un ruban, dont les nœuds tomoient sur le front. Cette singularité plut si fort au Roi, qu'il la pria de ne se pas coiffer autrement tout le jour, et dès le lendemain, toutes les dames parurent coiffées avec des *fontanges* ”.

Extracted from La Beaumelle.

V. 2. P. 101-2.

“ Il y avoit une dame de Fontpertuis, une *janséniste*, disoit le Roi, une *folle qui a couru M. Arnauld*. Il ne voulut pas que le fils de cette dame, qu'il croyoit entiché des mêmes sentimens, restât auprès

du duc d'Orléans, son neveu. *Ma foi*, répondit le duc, *je ne sais pas ce qu'a fait la mère; mais pour le fils, être janséniste, c'est une calomnie, car il ne croit pas même en Dieu. M'en assurez-vous*, reprit le Roi, *vous pouvez le garder*. St. Simon atteste que le fait lui a été rapporté par le duc d'Orléans le jour même." V. 3. P. 133.

CIBBER'S APOLOGY.

Dec. 24, 1828.

THIS has always been reputed so much of a dramatic text-book, that I felt my theatrical acquirements to be incomplete so long as I remained unacquainted with its contents. At length I obtained it, and as is generally the fate of high-raised expectations, mine were followed by disappointment. Its most striking fault, perhaps, consists in the difficulty one has in perceiving with what design it was written; a difficulty rather increased than removed by its title. After reading the work to the end I remained unable to discover wherein the "Apology" consisted; to whom it was addressed, or for what offence it was to be an atonement. Certainly, I think that no enemy, personal or critical, would be likely to feel his hostility much disarmed by a peace-offering like this, written in a mingled strain of mock humility and unaffected swagger, very little adapted to conciliatory purposes. Besides, I promised myself very high gratification from the style and composition of so noted a production from the same hand as "the Provoked Husband" and "Careless Husband;" but in this I was signally disappointed, for the materials are put together in a very slovenly way; the sentences are ill-constructed, and the language hardly ever rises into any elevation. But my chief disappointment arose from the scanty information the "Apology" affords respecting the history and professional merit of the various actors contemporary with the author. This is an omission the more to be regretted from the very interesting particulars given of all the eminent performers at the period of Cibber's introduction to the stage. His description of Betterton and Mrs. Montfort is truly excellent. The reason for this criticism not having been carried down to the time of his own retirement, proba-

bly is, that writing for readers of his own time exclusively, he assumed that the subject would be trite and familiar to them. We of the present day are, however, the sufferers, and certainly very ill compensated by the diffusive details of managerial intrigue and strife with which the concluding half of the work is occupied. It is indeed hardly possible to get through the minute relations of the expedients adopted by the author, to soothe the violent temper of one partner (Wilks), and to avoid shocking the avarice of another (Dogget). It would be unjust to dismiss the mention of this new edition of "Cibber's Apology" without a testimony to the great diligence and ability evinced by Mr. Bellchambers, the editor. His notes are valuable, both for the information they convey and for sometimes affording a very agreeable relief to an uninteresting text. I subjoin an extract in which I think the average merit of the diction and sentiment is perfectly exhibited.

"Having brought the government of the stage, through such various changes and revolutions, to this settled state, in which it continued to almost the time of my leaving it, it cannot be supposed that a period of so much quiet, and so long a train of success, though happy for those who enjoyed it, can afford such matter of surprise or amusement as might arise from times of more distress and disorder. A quiet time in history, like a calm in a voyage, leaves us but in an indolent station : to talk of our affairs when they were no longer ruffled by misfortunes, would be a picture without shade, a flat performance at best. As I might, therefore, throw all that tedious times of our tranquillity into one chasm in my history, and cut my way short, at once, to my last exit from the stage, I shall, at least, fill it up with such matter, only, as I have a mind should be known, how few soever may have patience to read it : yet, as I despair not of some readers, who may be most awake when they think others have most occasion to sleep ; who may be more pleased to find me languid than lively, or in the wrong than in the right ; why should I scruple, when it is so easy a matter, too, to gratify their particular taste, by venturing upon any error that I like, or the weakness of my judgment leads me to commit ? I think, too, I have a very good chance for my success in this passive ambition, by showing myself in a light I have not been seen in. "

P. 443-6.

CORRESPONDENCE AND MEMOIR
OF LORD COLLINGWOOD.

Jan. 16, 1829.

THIS is so valuable an accession to our national biography; calculated to honour so infinitely the memory of Lord Collingwood; so much what his surviving relatives and friends might feel a consolation and a pride in giving to the world; that one is surprised that eighteen years should have elapsed from his death to its publication. It has, however, at length appeared, and in a manner calculated to reflect high credit upon the judgment of its editor. The letters are selected so as in themselves to form almost a complete autobiography, and wherever a connecting remark was requisite, Mr. Collingwood has supplied it with succinctness and perspicuity.

The public life of Lord Collingwood contains but few incidents, and may be compressed into a brief summary. He was born in 1730 and in mere childhood was entered a midshipman under a relation of his family. The three principal naval engagements in which he bore a part were, those under Lord Howe in 1794, when the Brest fleet was destroyed; under Sir John Jervis off Cape St. Vincent, and lastly, Trafalgar. In this last battle he was the first to get into action; continued for a quarter of an hour, engaged single-handed with the entire French fleet, and in reward for his gallantry, received his peerage and his third medal. On the death of Nelson he succeeded to the command of the Mediterranean fleet, and held it until his own decease in 1810. The entire period of his chief command was passed in an irksome and anxious blockade of the enemy's ports, and in making efforts to second the national policy in the war against

France. This duty imposed on him a weight and diversity of mental and bodily labour which soon wore out his constitution, though naturally robust, and consigned him to a premature grave. Whilst occupying the Mediterranean station, he united in himself the characters of Admiral, General, Statesman and Diplomatist, and appears to have acquitted himself with consummate ability in all. By his adroitness, a peace was effected between England and Turkey; by his excellent temper and sagacious policy, the independent States of the Barbary coast were prevented from uniting with the French, and in accordance with his plan, the island of Candia was secured to the British. At the same time, he had to afford protection and aid to the Sicilians, Spaniards, and whatever other nation manifested a disposition to resist the yoke of France. When his constitution sunk under the fatigue and anxiety consequent upon those various duties, he applied for his recall, but it was unfeelingly refused by the Admiralty. From perhaps an overstrained idea of duty, he submitted to the decision and met the death he foresaw with the heroism which never forsook him.

From the evidences afforded by this correspondence, Lord Collingwood would appear to be one of those rarely gifted mortals, in whom the qualities we admire combine with those we love, to endue them with a character as nearly approaching perfection as human infirmity will allow. His patriotism was at once a passion and a principle. To it, and to the romantic devotedness to duty inspired by it, every wish of his heart, every conviction of his judgment yielded implicit subjection. There never was a man in whom the softer feelings of our nature,—love of family, attachment to friends and addiction to homestead occupations, more predominated than in Lord Collingwood : yet it was only necessary to tell him that their gratification was incompatible with the interests of his country, for him to yield them all up, and eventually lay down life itself, a ready, if not a chearful sacrifice.

Lord Collingwood cannot be ranked amongst those commanders whom fortune very especially favoured ; for five successive years that he eagerly watched the opportunity, the French fleet eluded his efforts to bring them to action, and more than once effected their objects in despite of his vigilance. But although , as he himself feelingly remarks, popular suffrage is only purchaseable by success, yet no person can read this work without admitting that if the

classic dogma, that human prudence can undeify and subjugate fortune, were well-founded, Lord Collingwood possessed enough of it to have reduced that power to his absolute dominion.

I extract a short letter ; one of those in which his aspirations after home are most affectingly expressed.

TO LADY COLLINGWOOD.

“ Ville de Paris, off Toulon, June 17, 1809.

“I am writing you a letter, my love, because there is nothing I so much delight in as a little communication with her on whom my heart for ever dwells. How this letter is to go to you, I know not. I never hear from your world, and cannot tell whether anything from ours ever reaches you ; but I take the chance of sending you my blessing. I am pretty well in health, but have fatigue enough ; nothing that is pleasurable ever happens to me. I have been lamenting our ill-luck in not meeting the French ships the only time, perhaps, that they will show themselves out of port for the summer ; but it was not to be avoided ; they never come out but with good assurance of being safe. Now that the French fleet is destroyed at Rochefort, they may surely select some officer to relieve me, for I am sadly worn. Tough as I have been, I cannot last much longer. I have seen all the ships and men out two or three times. Bounce and I seem to be the only personages who stand our ground. Many about me are yielding to the fatigue and confinement of a life which is certainly not natural to man, and which I have only borne thus far from a patient submission to my duty, and a natural desire to execute the duties of my profession as long as I was able, without regard to any personal satisfaction. The only comfort I have is to hear from you. ”

P. 528—9.

MÉMOIRES SUR JOSÉPHINE.

Jan. 21, 1829.

"She cannot exist without a grievance—and somebody to see or read how much grief becomes her."

LORD BYRON, of Madame de Staël.

I RUN some risk of prematurity in commenting upon those two volumes, as the fair author intimates her intention of publishing something more relating to the ex-Empress; but whether the forthcoming work is to be a sequel to, and bear the same title with the present, does not appear. At all events, having brought us to the decease and obsequies of Josephine, it appears to me that the *Mémoires* have already reached their natural term, and that I am pretty safe in treating them as a complete work.

Who the lady is that has thus disinterestedly volunteered to blazon the virtues of the repudiated Empress, does not transpire throughout: "She wishes to preserve her incognito," as Sir Mark Chase says, so that it is upon the authority of rumour only, that we know her to be Mad. Du Crest, the niece by marriage of Mad. De Genlis. That there is at least a literary connexion between these two ladies is evident. Indeed the similarity of disposition ascribed to each by herself would warrant a persuasion that they were even closely related by consanguinity. Every page of this work, (which, by the way, is much more a memoir of the writer than of Josephine,) bears the most striking resemblance, in style and sentiment, to the veteran authoress's life of herself. Both ladies have an inveterate habit of forming sudden and violent friendships, which seem to be broken off as suddenly; both exert the same successful zeal in obtaining valuable favours for others, whilst both seem to be forgotten themselves, in situations especially requiring returns in kind. The ingratitude and persecutions they encountered, and their *angelic* forgiveness of injuries, complete the parallel between the characters and fortunes of these two amiable heroines.

Of the life of Josephine, the only portion which the author can detail from personal observation, is included in the short space of about

two years, commencing soon after her divorce. During this period she passed her time between her residences of Malmaison and Navarre. According to the testimony of Madame Du Crest, all those qualities which render their possessor at once an object of affection and veneration, centred in the ex-Empress. She was humane and open-handed to the poor; generous and confiding in her friendships; unalterably devoted to Napoleon, though keenly alive to the slight with which he treated her. Sweetness of temper, sensibility and candour were pre-eminent amongst a host of minor good qualities, and completed an *amiable* character, whilst her solid judgment and cultivated talents constituted a perfectly *respectable* one. Such was Josephine, from the enthusiastic report of her eulogist; but unfortunately when we come to examine more closely, we find her blemished with one fault, perhaps weakness, which sometimes neutralised—sometimes perverted all her good qualities, and which renders very questionable the solidity of that understanding for which so much respect is claimed. She was easily influenced by the persons about her, even to the commission of acts the most repugnant to her nature, and which sometimes gave to her conduct the appearance of studied duplicity. Thus, she abruptly commanded the writer and her mother to vacate their apartment at Malmaison, only a few days after loading them with caresses and assurances of never-waning favour. And wherefore? Because some of the persons of whose enmity to those ladies she was fully cognisant, suggested to her that the younger was seeking to ensnare the affections of the viceroy. But should such a tale have been credited, much less acted upon, coming from such a source, without even giving the party accused an opportunity of exculpation, and that, a person just before, possessing her highest regard? Again—after their dismissal, as a kind of salvo, there was to be a carriage sent regularly three days in every week to convey these ladies to make visits to Malmaison. This was soon discontinued; still, says the author, through the machinations of her enemies. But why were not these machinations suspected and defeated by Josephine? The fact is, I believe, she was like her biographer and most of their countrywomen, very devoted while their warmth of affection lasts, but liable to very sudden and causeless refrigerations. It is worth noting, that from the time that the carriage ceased to be sent for her, the author never again saw Josephine! Carriage hire was too expensive, forsooth; and

Malmaison is under two leagues from Paris ! So much for the sincerity of the affection on *her* side.

The history of Madame Du Crest herself (supposing that she is the writer) consists of various instances of amiable giddiness, of which she seems rather vain ; of her sensations at various balls and fêtes which she describes ; of her intercourse with Josephine, and her sufferings, (a Frenchwoman is a *Victime* or nothing) from calumnies, persecutions, poverty and ingratitude , the instances of which her meek endurance keeps untold. She is also fond of character-sketching, and accomplishes it, as she does every thing, with point and animation at least, if without much profundity. Her selection of subjects for the exercise of this talent is judiciously formed of personages generally possessing much celebrity.

Upon the whole this work is emphatically French : French in its faults and French in its merits. When Madame is gay, she is natural ; when she is sad, she is—eloquent. For this reason we laugh both at her joys and her sorrows.

I transcribe one of her portraits, containing all the spirit and brilliancy of her colouring.

“ M. de Sémonville, petit, gros, gai, cherchait à cacher, sous une apparence de bonhomie , une extrême finesse et ce génie d'intrigue pour lequel je crois qu'il ne connaît pas de rival. Son regard perçant forçait les femmes de baisser le leur , et devait découvrir avec rapidité ce qui se passait dans les cœurs des hommes en place, dont il était toujours le plus intime ami. Les personnes qui approchent M. de Sémonville prétendent qu'il a une certaine *candeur de fourberie* très-singulière. Il ne se cache pas de courir au secours du vainqueur ; avoue , avec simplicité , qu'il aime la faveur, et ne craint pas de donner sa recette , qu'il emploie pour être toujours sur ses pieds , persuadé que peu de gens auraient l'esprit et le talent de l'employer.

“ On m'a raconté que M. le duc de Richelieu fut un instant à croire que le roi Louis XVIII accepterait la démission qu'il avait envoyée la veille. A sept heures du matin , il voit entrer chez lui M. de Sémonville , qui se précipite dans ses bras avec émotion : ‘ Je suis donc conservé, M. le Marquis ? Puisque je vous vois , j'ose espérer que Sa Majesté a bien voulu céder à ce que je demandais, pour qu'il me fût possible de garder avec honneur le portefeuille. Votre présence

m'assure que je pourrai encore servir mon souverain et la France , confondus dans mon cœur. — Oui , M. le duc ; le roi s'en est expliqué hier au soir très-franchement. — J'en étais certain , dit en riant M. de Richelieu ; votre vue est toujours d'un bon présage."

Tome 2. P. 79, 80.

TRAVELLER'S ORACLE.

Jan. 28, 1829.

MOST of what is really useful in those two volumes was transcribed into the newspapers when the work came out, and better had it been for Dr. Kitchener's reputation were these excerpts less calculated to excite a desire of becoming acquainted with their source. For once that our approbation is claimed by a really sensible, practical admonition, we are a hundred times revolted by the puerilities, irrelevancy, puffing, petty and technical detail, which beset and deform the whole of the "Traveller's Oracle." It is, I think, quite necessary to bear in mind, that the most egregious vanity is not incompatible with great sagacity, to convince us that Dr. Kitchener's writings are the effusions of one man : so remarkably does sound sense and accurate observation amalgamate with absolute silliness and downright drivelling throughout. But if we suppose him actuated by a desire to display a universal knowingness ; to be *up* to every thing and to mate every man in his own craft, the incongruity is in some sort explained.

In reading the "Traveller's Oracle," or that small portion of it which has any reference to its title, one is struck with its elemental error of omitting to balance means and ends , and the total sacrifice of the latter to the former which it inculcates. No one of the slightest experience in travelling ever expected to deviate from the beaten tracks without meeting ordinary fare, or perhaps even an occasional damp bed, that most formidable of locomotive calamities ; yet would any man without a keeper, convert his carriage into a store-house upon wheels , incommode his person by the crowd of make-shifts here recommended , and worry his mind with the constant anxiety which the care of such a multiplicity of items requires,

to avoid any such casualties? It is indeed scarcely possible to suppose that the intelligent mind of the author should have overlooked those palpable objections, or to avoid the conclusion that his object has been rather to make a parade of his own cleverness than seriously to lay down rules for the adoption of reasonable people.

It is in the first volume alone that we find anything of directions to travellers, and then they are every moment interrupted by digressions upon whatever the most inveterate egotism can prompt. First comes a precept; then a song, music and all; next a recipe; then a eulogy upon the Cook's Oracle, the peristaltic persuaders, or some other invention of the author; a very copious collection of extracts from the Duke of Newcastle's and other works, together with a record of some oral wisdom of a Mr. Jarvis, a coachman, fill up the interstices, and constitute the first volume. The second is, I believe, exclusively occupied with the details of locomotion by auxiliary means, in the English metropolis. This portion must be very valuable to the resident there, but except as matter of curiosity, it has merely a local interest and may safely remain a sealed book for all residents without the bills of mortality.

To render impartial justice, I shall insert a short specimen both of Dr. Kitchener's sense, and of his nonsense.

“Be liberal. — The advantages of a reputation for generosity which a person easily acquires, and the many petty annoyances he entirely avoids, by the annual disbursement of five pounds worth of Shillings and Half-Crowns, will produce him five times as much satisfaction as he can obtain by spending that sum in any other way—it does not depend so much upon a man's general expense, as it does upon his giving handsomely where it is proper to give at all—he who gives *Two Shillings* is called *Mean*, while he who gives *Half-a-Crown* is considered *Generous*; so that the difference of these two opposite characters depends upon *Sixpence*.”

V. 1. P. 45-6.

“If curious children ask ‘Whose carriage is this?’ tell your coachman to stare full in their face, and say nothing: if they have the impudence to repeat the question, he may reply, ‘It belongs to Mr. *Pry*.’ If equivocation be ever allowable, it is to such impertinents.

“ Those who may admire the carriage and want to know who built it, will find the coach-maker's name on the axle-tree caps.”

V. 2. P. 199, 200.

NAPIER'S HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA. (FIRST VOLUME.)

Feb. 2, 1829.

THE prevailing practice of publishing in single numbers is inconvenient both to the reader and the reviewer, and ultimately injurious, I should think, to the author himself. His work is judged of by the concluding portion only, and after its connexion with the earlier, prefatory matter has been forgotten. It is to preserve this connexion in your memory, that I shall apply myself in the present article, rather to form a summary of the events related, than to enter into anything like minute criticism upon the merits of the style and composition ; rather to lay the foundations of a future reviewal which shall be complete, than to aim at a final judgment, upon my present insufficient competency.

Major Napier commences his history with the circumvention of the Spanish Royal family by Napoleon in 1808, and for the present concludes with the retreat of the English from Corunna at the commencement of the subsequent year. The outbreak of that momentous war which raged throughout Spain for seven successive years, may be dated from the insurrection of Madrid which took place on the 2d May 1808, from a popular persuasion that Don Antonio, the last resident member of the royal family, was about being spirited away, and in which 700 French were slain. This commotion instantly fired a train which spread through the whole country, and a spirit of wild enthusiasm and of ferocious resistance to the invaders, was immediately enkindled. The defence of Saragossa was the first important occasion for the display of this enthusiasm, and its success still farther diffused and exalted it. The retreat of the enemy from before Gerona served to sustain the national spirit.

But the patriots were not destined to run an uninterrupted course of this triumphant kind. The battle of Rio Seco, where Cuesta at the head of 25,000 men was utterly routed by Bessières, was their first reverse; to this however, the immediately subsequent surrender of Dupont at Baylen with 18,000 men, acted as much more than a counterpoise, and caused the evacuation of Madrid by the Intruder King, as Southey always calls Joseph Bonaparte. In November 1807, so prostrate were the energies of Portugal, that Junot entered Lisbon unopposed, at the head of only a few dragoons, and reached the harbour critically in time to witness the embarkation of the Royal family to Brazil. A few disconnected, trivial tumults rather tended to confirm than to endanger the French domination until the arrival of the English army under Sir Arthur Wellesley in July 1808. This general was placed in subordination to Sirs Hew Dalrymple, Harry Burrard and John Moore, and though the ministerial despatches for the guidance of his operations, appear to have been models of confusion and inconsistency, it was under the conduct of this child of fortune that the few encouraging events of this campaign were transacted. The first of these was the combat of Rorica in which the French were worsted with the loss of 600 killed and wounded: the battle of Vimeira followed, having for its immediate result, the defeat of the enemy with a loss of between 2 and 3000 men, and for its proximate consequence, the evacuation of Portugal by the French army, by the convention of Lisbon, improperly termed — and most improperly vilified under that term — the Convention of Cintra. Of this convention Bonaparte said, that he was about sending Junot before a council of war, but the English tried their generals and enabled him to spare an old friend. The English army now entered Spain, commanded by Sir John Moore, and preceded by a detachment of English agents, partly civil and partly military, to whose intervention generally, the author imputes a vast deal of mischief. Bonaparte also put his shoulders seriously to the wheel, and despatched an army exceeding 300,000 men to overrun simultaneously the whole of Spain, at the same time preserving among the different corps a plan of co-operation devised with the most consummate skill. On the other hand, from the ignorance and mismanagement of the English cabinet, the execrable corruption of the Spanish Juntas, and the incapacity and dissensions of the national generals all combined, the country was

reduced to a state in which resistance seemed quite hopeless. Bonaparte arrived on the 8th of November at Vittoria; on the 9th, the Spanish army under the Conde de Belvedere was routed at Gamonal, almost without firing a shot: Blake was destroyed at Espinosa on the 10th: Castanos on the 23d at Tudela; the last remaining obstacle to the free passage to Madrid, the pass of the Samosierra, deemed almost impregnable, was forced by a charge of Polish cavalry, and Madrid, after one day's useless deliberation, opened its gates on the 4th of December. Sir John Moore established his head quarters at Salamanca on the 23d. of November, and here a partial detection of the falsehood and deception of his allies, determined him to retrace his steps to Portugal. This resolution was however suspended by a well vouched, though false report, that Madrid was resisting, and for the purpose of relieving that city by attracting the entire French force to himself, he advanced to Carrion. Finding that the whole of the French army was moving upon him and that he had thus gained his object, he commenced that memorable retreat, which after much skirmishing with his close pursuers, great relaxation of discipline, and formidable obstructions from the weather and the bad roads, was finally accomplished by the end of January 1809: the battle of Corunna was fought and won, and the troops safely embarked for England.

Major Napier divides his history, with much logical distinctness, into two branches, the military and the political. To judge of its merits in the first relation, a theoretic knowledge of the art of war and an experimental one of its operations, are severally requisite; as I possess neither kind, I have not ventured even to form an opinion upon this division. It is from the treatment of the political head therefore, that my estimate has been formed, and my tribute claimed to the admirable, generous, soldier-like spirit that breathes through and animates every sentiment. Though he dedicates his work to the Duke of Wellington, the records of the most perfect independence of opinion abound in every page. Indeed the avowed political sentiments of the writer are in direct opposition to those of the party of which the duke has become the head. Although the full measure of praise is bestowed on that general for his consummate military talents, it is without an insinuation being ventured in derogation either of his adversaries or his rivals. Napoleon is boldly styled the first military genius that has appeared for two thousand years, and far from

a leaf being taken from Sir John Moore's laurels to deck his successor's brow, the whole of his conduct in the Spanish campaign is so fairly examined and its defence so clear, so complete and so masterly, that even the warmest admirers of the departed hero will derive a still ampler idea of the elevation of his genius from its perusal. Major Napier's style is original, nervous and characteristic; compensating some occasional negligences by flashes of beautiful and appropriate imagery. His preface appears to me a faultless model for that style of writing; combining together fulness and compression. Should Major Napier end his literary labours here, as it is sincerely to be hoped he may not, he has effected enough to secure his reputation as a man of eminent worth and brilliant talents.

I transcribe a passage upon the exultation produced in England by the first manifestations of Spanish resistance.

"No factious feeling interfered to check this enthusiasm: the party in power, anxious to pursue a warlike system necessary to their own political existence, saw with joy that the stamp of justice and high feeling would, for the first time, be affixed to their policy. The party out of power having always derided the impotence of the ancient dynasties, and asserted that regular armies alone were insufficient means of defence, could not consistently refuse their approbation to a struggle originating with, and carried on entirely by the Spanish multitude. The people at large exulted that the manifest superiority of plebeian virtue and patriotism was acknowledged.

"The arrival of the Asturian deputies was, therefore, universally hailed as an auspicious event. Their wishes were forestalled, their suggestions were attended to with eagerness; their demands were so readily complied with, and the riches of England were so profusely tendered to them by the ministers, that it can scarcely be doubted that the after arrogance and extravagance of the Spaniards arose from the manner in which their first applications were met; for there is a way of conferring a favour that appears like accepting one: and this secret being discovered by the English cabinet, the Spaniards soon demanded as a right what they had at first solicited as a boon. In politics it is a grievous fault to be too generous; gratitude, in state affairs, is unknown; and as the appearance of disinterested kindness never deceives, it should never be assumed."

P. 136-7.

MEMOIRS OF SAVARY DUKE OF ROVIGO.

(FIRST VOLUME.)

March 8, 1829.

M. SAVARY has as yet only accomplished his first volume, embracing the period from his adoption of the military profession in the revolutionary war of 1793, to the end of the campaign of 1806. He promises a sequel to his memoirs, but having effected his avowed object in publishing, and being, I suspect, one of those whose promises class with "dicers' oaths," it seems very probable that we shall hear nothing more of them. The avowed motive which has imbrued this personage's pen in ink, was to lay before the world an authentic account of the circumstances of the Duc D'Enghien's capture and execution, now called by common consent *a murder*, and to rescue himself from the charge of being accessory to that catastrophe. The substance of the charge against him is, that when General Hullin, president of the commission for the trial of the Duke, was about transmitting his request for an interview with Bonaparte to the latter, Savary, who was present as commander of the troops guarding the castle, snatched the pen from his hand saying, "This is my affair:" and that neglecting to write himself, he was the means of accelerating the Duke's death and intercepting the exercise of that clemency which Bonaparte was disposed to extend to him. The justificatory version of Savary required and evinces some ingenuity, supposing it to be a mere fabrication. Being the thorough-going eulogist of Napoleon, he had the delicate task of making his own defence consistent with his master's exculpation, and to this end he casts all the blame on Talleyrand. This minister, according to the memoir, had provoked the hostility of the nobility and clergy by the measures he took to promote the revolution in 1789. And having thus especial reason to dread the restoration of the Bourbons, he was desirous of averting the evil even by the extermination of that family. At the period of the Duc D'Enghien's arrest in the neutral

territory of Baden, the Baron (afterwards Duke) D'Alberg was envoy from that court to Paris, and devoted to the service of Talleyrand. His complicity in the execution consisted in withholding from his court all information respecting the Duke until the day after his death, and thereby preventing a remonstrance being sent against the whole proceeding; while General Hullin, another creature of Talleyrand's, pressed on the trial and execution contrary to the forms prescribed by Bonaparte himself, and fabricated the story about the pen to throw the odium upon Savary. Such is the account given by the author. I believe it was in Scott's life of Napoleon that I saw a discussion upon this dark affair, which he sums up by observing that from the testimony of such a knot of scoundrels it was impossible to obtain any clue to the facts: agreeing with him fully in this opinion, I perused those recriminations and defences very much as one would hearken to the squabbles of a gang of convicted felons, each wanting to shift from himself to his fellow the weight of a crime for which some one was to suffer. As to Bonaparte, his conduct on the occasion reminds one a good deal of Elizabeth's on the execution of Mary. He did not however carry the joke, if joke it was, quite so far, as none of the agents were disgraced, and the expression of his own displeasure was confined to one or two exclamations and a moody silence of some days continuance.

The historical part of these memoirs is executed in that spirit of outrageous nationality and worshipful reverence of Napoleon which marks the style of all the revolutionary French. His devotedness to a benefactor now beyond the reach of flattery is indeed rather an estimable trait in this writer. But with what patience can an English reader endure it to be urged as a censure against a French Admiral, that he did not conquer an English fleet *superior* to his by *only* two ships? yet this felicitous combination of a lie of fact with a most impudent one of implication, occurs in Savary's remarks on the battle of Trafalgar. It is from such an instance as this that I judge his assertions on all subjects to be quite unworthy of confidence, and that I therefore refrain from giving any abstract of his narrative. I cite a specimen of the style (which is uniformly good), from the opening of the fifteenth chapter.

“ L'opposition dispersée par ce coup de vigueur, les députés favorables à la révolution qui s'opérait vinrent se rallier aux anciens.

L'abolition du directoire, l'ajournement des deux conseils, la formation d'une commission législative, composée de cinquante membres, dont vingt-cinq devaient être tirés de chaque conseil, fut aussitôt décrétée. On avisa ensuite à l'organisation du pouvoir. On créa, sous le nom de consuls, trois magistrats chargés de l'exercer, jusqu'à ce qu'on eût rédigé une constitution nouvelle. Les trois consuls furent le général Bonaparte, les directeurs Siéyes et Roger Ducos; tous trois vinrent s'établir au Luxembourg, où l'impatience publique attendait le succès de l'entreprise pour s'exhaler en vives acclamations..

“ Ici commence une ère nouvelle pour le général Bonaparte; ici commence son règne. *Nous avons un maître*, dit Siéyes, qui ne connut bien qu'après l'avoir entendu discuter dans le conseil les questions les plus difficiles en matière de gouvernement et d'administration, l'homme que jusqu'alors il n'avait cru supérieur que dans la guerre.”

MUNGO PARK'S TRAVELS IN AFRICA.

“ A frame of adamant, a soul of fire
No dangers fright him and no labours tire.”
Vanity of Human Wishes.

March 14, 1829.

THE life of Mungo Park may be appealed to, as furnishing a fresh and striking instance of the decisiveness with which the hand of nature sometimes imprints upon the individual character the stamp of a special destination. Park was born a traveller: his organisation, both physical and moral, exhibited almost every requisite for that course of life. To a frame of powerful strength, he added a constitution of such vigour as to be almost impervious to fatigue and privations, and unaffected by the most sudden changes of climate and habits. To these were united the moral attributes of the most imperturbable patience, inflexible perseverance, cool and steady courage, unshaken fortitude, serenity of temper, and above all, sound and practical sense. More could not be desired to con-

summate the character of an accomplished traveller. As, unfortunately, few were to be met with of a congenial temperament to share his hardships and prosecute his designs, it is more to be deplored than wondered at, that Park should have perished as he did, almost alone, and with his great object unattained.

The first volume contains a personal narrative of the journey commenced from the mouth of the Gambia in June 1793, and terminated at the close of 1797. The object of this undertaking was to investigate the course of the Niger, the great river of central Africa, in the expectation of tracing it either to a junction with the Nile to the North, or to an identity with the Congo to the South, and so establishing the practicability of a navigation from the Southern Pacific to the interior of Africa. This journey was performed by Mr. Park alone, and during its progress he suffered a variety and extent of hardships that it is really inconceivable that any human creature should have survived. That calamity which seems to have impressed him with the bitterest recollections, was his captivity under a Moorish chief, who, with his savage subjects, seems to have studied to heap upon corporal sufferings, all the insult and vexation that even refined cruelty could prompt to lacerate the mind. After a most hazardous escape from his tyrant, Mr. Park pursued his journey to the westward until his arrival at a place called *Silla*, where finding the periodical rains set in, and himself by repeated robberies upon him, destitute of every necessary, he reluctantly admitted the impossibility of proceeding any further, and commenced the almost equally hopeless task of returning a distance of five hundred miles without clothes, or money, or friends to assist him. He took his homeward course a good deal to the southward of his advancing one, and between the pathless deserts he had to cross, tenanted chiefly by the lion and the wolf, and the swollen rivers infested with alligators, while the most of his own species he encountered were equally ruthless with these savage creatures, he was on the point of perishing when he providentially entered a village where the chief man took compassion on him; kept him in his own house until the rainy season had passed over, and then attached him to a caravan with which he himself was going in the direction of Park's destination. The details of this first expedition are written with great perspicuity and in an unaffected, fluent style. It appears however, that for this merit of his work, Park was indebted to Bryan Edwards, the historian of the

British West Indies, by whom the materials were arranged in the most favourable form for publication.

The narrative of the second journey is contained in such detached correspondence as was received from Park from his leaving Jillifree in April 1805, to the date of his last letter in the November of the same year. To this is added a diary written by the guide who accompanied him to the place of his embarkation on the Niger, and who was subsequently despatched to gather tidings of his fate. From the information of this man it appears that Park continued to sail down the Niger amidst the constant attacks of the natives, both from the shore and the rocks which rise out of the river: that at length, accompanied by the three sole survivors of his entire party, he reached a place where the stream was almost intercepted by rocks having but one navigable outlet, formed like a doorway. The natives placed themselves over this passage, and the voyagers finding escape impossible, all leapt into the river and were drowned, leaving the second guide, from whom this account was obtained, alone in the boat. He stated further, that he surrendered himself prisoner to the assailants and narrowly escaped with life. This account is obnoxious to many objections on the score of probability, and it is most likely that the time and manner of poor Park's death will ever remain unknown; the fact being nevertheless but too certain. The narrative of this journey is necessarily less complete and satisfactory than that of the first. The journal so carefully kept by Park, perished with him; had he survived and returned to his native country, it would have been doubtless made the groundwork of a consecutive relation like the first volume. I add a few natural expressions of complaint suggested to him during his captivity.

“*March 15.* With the returning day commenced the same round of insult and irritation: the boys assembled to beat the hog, and the men and women to plague the Christian. It is impossible for me to describe the behaviour of a people who study mischief as a science, and exult in the miseries and misfortunes of their fellow creatures. It is sufficient to observe that the rudeness, ferocity, and fanaticism, which distinguish the Moors from the rest of mankind, found here a proper subject whereon to exercise their propensities. I was a *stranger*, I was *unprotected*, I was a *Christian*; each of these circumstances is sufficient to drive every spark of humanity

from the heart of a Moor; but when all of them, as in my case, were combined in the same person, and a suspicion prevailed withal, that I had come as a *spy* into the country, the reader will easily imagine that, in such a situation, I had every thing to fear. Anxious, however, to conciliate favour, and if possible to afford the Moors no pretence for ill-treating me, I readily complied with every command, and patiently bore every insult; but never did any period of my life pass away so heavily: from sunrise to sunset, was I obliged to suffer, with an unruffled countenance, the insults of the rudest savages upon earth."

V. 1. P. 122-3.

BRAND'S JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO PERU.

March 18, 1829.

MR. BRAND'S publication may be summarily disposed of. The tract selected for his journey consisting almost entirely of monotonous deserts of plain, or mountains clad with eternal snows, presented little diversity of materials for observation; while the absence of all scientific or literary attainments in the author, disqualifies him from compensating for the paucity of his visible resources by drawing from internal ones. Yet I think most people will rest satisfied with the representations of Mr. Brand, at least so far as to feel little temptation to subject them to an experimental test; for a more complete assemblage of discomforts than, by his account, beset the unfortunate Peruvian traveller, it would be difficult to imagine. In his classification of the houses of public resort through his journey, those are termed *good* where you can procure bread,—*excellent*, if a little spirits or a few groceries are added; whereas the epithet *bad* is charitably reserved for such as afford absolutely nothing. Filth, vermin, a total want of all furniture beyond a few rickety chairs and the most rude cooking apparatus, pervade alike the *good*, *bad* and *indifferent*. The author attempts to relieve this picture of dreariness by his encomiums upon the character and manners of the people; but humanity, even of that baser alloy, which is mainly derived from a principle of self-interest, can have made but little way

amongst a people who habitually drive their horses until they drop down lifeless, as is the practice of the Peruvians. The course of Mr. Brand's travels after his landing at Rio Janeiro, was a journey southward to Buenos Ayres, performed partly by land and partly by a coasting voyage; both of which modes appear to have been equally wretched. From Buenos Ayres he proceeded across those cheerless plains called *Pampas*, until their western termination at the foot of the Andes. This journey was performed partly on horseback and occasionally in a carriage, both conveyances going at full speed. The first crossing of these stupendous masses was effected in the month of August, that is about the depth of winter in those regions. Nothing could be more difficult for both the travellers and their mules than their progress in this journey seems to have been. The city of Valparaiso upon the western coast of South America is the first considerable place at the opposite side of the chain to that of the traveller's outset. Between this and Lima, Mr. Brand passed the interval until the approach of summer enabled him to retrace his steps with somewhat less of hardship.

I transcribe the description of one of the *Casuchas*, or resting places of which several are disposed at intervals along the passage across the Cordillera.

“ These hovels, miserable and wretched as they truly are, prove to the storm-driven traveller, in the dreadful regions of the Andes, a most welcome resting-place. There are eight of them in the highest parts of the Cordillera; they are built of brick, at an elevation of about ten feet from the ground, and average fourteen feet by twelve inside; once they had doors, but necessity, that stern mother of invention, instigated some perishing travellers to burn them, in order to supply the want of that necessary article, fuel, which is not even to be seen during winter in the Cordillera. The very cross-beams were burnt, so that it was impossible to keep out the perishing cold air. Added to this, there were nine holes to admit the light, which various travellers had taken the greatest pains, (now the want of a door admitted it,) to stuff up with any old rags, bricks, or stones, they could find; and proving that even these were not easily procured, they had pulled the bricks from out of the wall, and off the outside of what at one time, was a flight of brick steps to ascend by, and which are now so dilapidated as

to render it a task to clamber up into the interior; so that in a few years, if no means are taken to repair them, even these miserable abodes for the shelter of man will tumble to pieces." *P.* 136-7.

It was in the year 1827 that this journey was performed.

CAPTAIN PARRY'S NARRATIVE

OF AN ATTEMPT TO REACH THE NORTH POLE IN 1827.

March 22, 1829.

THE present and the two preceding articles would induce the suspicion that I had been lately administering to a "truant disposition," and sending my mind at least, upon voyages of discovery. I have visited the South of the globe with Mungo Park; joined Mr. Brand in a trip to the West, and being now fresh returned with Captain Parry I purpose setting off forthwith to the East under the auspices of Mr. Buckingham. Of all my recent fellow-travellers, Captain Parry is my favourite, and I believe that the great satisfaction I felt in his society will be partaken by every admirer of a clear descriptive relation of a most interesting experiment.

This last enterprise of Captain Parry was undertaken for the purpose of prosecuting the polar discoveries by the means recommended by Captain Scoresby, and sanctioned by the observations of another arctic traveller, Captain Phipps. This latter, who made his voyage in the year 1773, states, that on his arrival beyond the 81st parallel, he descried from the crow's nest, immense fields of level ice, stretching as far as the eye could reach, to the northward, and Captain Scoresby, who made observations in a still higher latitude, pronounced a strong opinion as to the feasibility of the plan now adopted by Captain Parry. This was to proceed from the northermost part of Spitzbergen, in boats constructed alike for being drawn across the ice, or sailing through any interposed or incumbent water. In pursuance of this project, Captain Parry steered for the Northern latitudes in the sloop *Hecla*, a vessel whose name is now as inseparably associated as his own with arctic discoveries. A considerable time was lost on the North coast of Spitzbergen before a convenient

harbour could be found for the ship, but this being ultimately obtained, the party set out on their dreary journey on the 22d of June. Having reached the parallel of $82^{\circ}. 40' 25''$ the highest latitude of which there is an authentic record of any former traveller having attained, Captain Parry became aware of the inutility of persevering in his attempts to reach the 83d degree, to which he had latterly confined his hopes, and from the former point he retraced his course. To this relinquishment of his more recent design, he was compelled by a current impelled southward by north winds, the force of which caused the boat to retrograde during the necessary periods of rest, beyond what all the exertions of the crew during their hours of labour, were able to overcome. As to his original and great object, the attainment of the pole, he became at once convinced of its impracticability by the proposed means. Instead of the vast expanses, or fields of ice described by Phipps, the floes or level surfaces seen by Captain Parry never exceeded three miles square, and very rarely approached even to that magnitude. In general he found the surface most irregular; composed of small detached fragments; obstructed by steep hills (technically called *hummocks*,) and intersected by large surfaces of water. Captain Parry regained his ship after an absence of sixty one days, on the 20th of August, without a single individual of the party being seriously indisposed, and after having with the most unremitting toil, traversed a distance which he estimates at 1127 statute miles.

This last remark respecting the health of the party, suggests to me the mention of what I consider the chief charm of this very attractive narrative. It is the evidence it affords of the admirable manner in which the modern discoveries of science can be made available to the ordinary comforts and well-being of man, and of the provident humanity with which all its resources were called into requisition that could contribute to the wants or wishes of the humbler sharers in this enterprise. Not less gratifying is it to perceive the sentiments of reciprocal good will which these attentions appear to have excited in their objects. Amid the most painful and discouraging toils, beset with hardships and enduring privations of the severest nature, not one murmur escaped; nay, so perfect were the habits of subordination among the crew, that when the inclemency of the cold began to benumb their mental faculties, they mechanically obeyed orders without appearing to comprehend them.

This kindness on the one side and gratitude on the other, is really quite refreshing to contemplate, and does the highest honour to all parties concerned.

Captain Parry's narrative is very short, and appears still more so for an obvious reason. There is scarcely a page that would not afford me an eligible specimen—the one I have chosen is the commencement of the ice travelling.

“ We set off on our first journey over the ice at ten, P. M. on the 24th, Table Island bearing S. S. W. with thick fog, which afterwards changed to rain. The bags of pemmican * were placed upon the sledges, and the bread in the boats, with the intention of securing the latter from wet; but this plan we were very soon obliged to relinquish. We now commenced upon very slow and laborious travelling, the pieces of ice being of small extent and very rugged, obliging us to make three journies, and sometimes four, with the boats and baggage, and to launch several times across narrow pools of water. This, however, was nothing more than we had expected to encounter at the margin of the ice, and for some distance within it; and every individual exerted himself to the very utmost, with the hope of the sooner reaching the main or field ice. We stopped to dine at 5 A. M. on the 25th, having made, by our log, (which we kept very carefully, marking the courses by compass, and estimating the distances), about two miles and a half of northing; and again setting forward, proceeded till 11, A. M., when we halted to rest, our latitude by observation at noon being $81^{\circ} 15' 15''$.

“ Setting out again at half past nine in the evening, we found our way to lie over nothing but small loose rugged masses of ice, separated by little pools of water, obliging us constantly to launch and haul up the boats, each of which operations required them to be unloaded, and occupied nearly a quarter of an hour. It came on to rain very hard on the morning of the 26th; and finding we were making very little progress, (having advanced not more than half a mile in four hours,) and that our clothes would be soon wet through, we halted at half past one, and took shelter under the awnings. The weather improving at six o'clock, we again moved forward, and

* Portable dressed beef, the preparation of which Capt. Parry describes in the introduction.

travelled till a quarter past eleven, when we hauled up the boats upon the only tolerably large floe piece in sight. The rain had very much increased the quantity of water lying upon the ice, of which nearly half the surface was now covered with numberless little ponds of various shapes and extent. It is a remarkable fact that we had already experienced, in the course of this summer, more rain than during the whole of seven previous summers *taken together*, though passed in latitudes from 17°, to 15° lower than this. A great deal of the ice over which we passed to day presented a very curious appearance and structure, being composed, on its upper surface, of numberless irregular needle-like crystals, placed vertically, and nearly close together, their length varying, in different pieces of ice, from five to ten inches, and their breadth in the middle about half an inch, but pointed at both ends. The upper surface of ice having this structure sometimes looks like greenish velvet; a vertical section of it, which frequently occurs at the margin of floes, resembles, while it remains compact, the most beautiful satin-spar, and asbestos, when falling to pieces. At this early part of the season, this kind of ice afforded pretty firm footing, but as the summer advanced, the needles became more loose and moveable, rendering it extremely fatiguing to walk over them, besides cutting our boots and feet, on which account the men called them “penknives.” It appeared probable to us that this peculiarity might be produced by the heavy drops of rain piercing their way downwards through the ice, and thus separating the latter into needles of the form above described, rather than to any regular crystallization when in the act of freezing; which supposition seemed the more reasonable, as the needles are always placed in a vertical position, and never occur except from the upper surface downwards.” P. 59-60-61-62.

BUCKINGHAM'S TRAVELS IN MESOPOTAMIA.

March 51, 1829.

I BELIEVE it is my taste for light reading having survived the appetite for novels and romances, its most legitimate food, that has made me latterly peruse accounts of voyages and travels with

increasing avidity; while the habit I have gained of acquainting myself with the geography of the countries treated of, has given to this branch of literature an unusual fixedness in my memory. Whatever may be the cause, I have received great pleasure and, I hope, some benefit from the three or four last works of this nature which have come to my hands, and to these effects Mr. Buckingham has contributed his full proportion. Mesopotamia, the theatre of his present narrative, is comprehended, and almost insulated between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and presents one of the most favourable possible fields for the traveller of intelligence and learning; for there is much in its actual state to excite and repay curiosity, and it is besides, emphatically a region of recollections. At the present day, it includes the cities of Diarbekr, Orfah, Mousul, and Bagdad, and was the site of Nineveh and Babylon, those stupendous creations whose commencements date from the remotest antiquity, and whose intimate connexion with the earliest records of that scheme upon which human salvation depends, and to the truth of which they are in their ruins an abiding attestation, confers on them a character of awful and affecting solemnity. Mr. Buckingham appears to have been very felicitously adapted to combine the twofold aspect under which this interesting country may be viewed. His successful assumption of the Mahomedan costume and character, whatever may be said of its morality, afforded him opportunities of entering the mosques, domesticating with the natives, and of minutely informing himself upon their habits, such as might be hopelessly sought for by the undisguised European traveller, subject as he always is to the hatred and contempt of the Asiatics. Mr. Buckingham also evinces quite sufficient store of ancient learning and of the spirit of research, to qualify him for a highly respectable authority, either to confirm or correct the opinions of others upon subjects of antiquarian speculation. His surmises respecting the original titles and purpose of the subsisting ruins, are plausible at least, and generally reconcilable with the earliest authorities, and he discusses all these subjects with a perfect exemption from tediousness or pedantry. It may be considered as enhancing the value of Mr. Buckingham's researches, that from the obstacles to general travelling in this country, there are few, even of the most locomotive, likely to attempt seeing it with their own eyes. The only two modes of travelling are, either by joining a caravan of merchandize, or going under the

conduct of one of the Tartars employed as government couriers. These present nearly balanced, though opposite evils. By the first mode, you creep—by the second, you fly. By the one, you are plundered in detail by the arbitrary imposts levied with the most insolent tyranny by the chiefs of the predatory hordes which infest the country. By the other, you have a great chance of being pillaged once for all, and then murdered. If any amelioration could be hoped for from a government of besotted fatalists like the Turks, it would be inconceivable that such abuses should be permitted to exist, and in one of their finest provinces. But so much has impunity augmented the strength and boldness of these robbers, that according to Mr. Buckingham, there is one tribe of them called Wahabees, inhabiting the desert, who only require a little discipline to make them masters of the entire province. It may be added as a parting eulogy of the present work, that if Mr. Buckingham does not exhibit much of that inflexibility which would brace up the Christian spirit to the endurance of martyrdom, rather than even seemingly to renounce its tenets, he appears nevertheless extremely familiar with the inspired authors, and that not the least interesting parts of his book are those which exhibit instances of the similarity of the existing habits of domestic life with those described in the Bible. I extract an account of the *second* pillaging incursion, which the party of Mr. Buckingham had to encounter on their journey. It occurred on the plain of Sinjar between Nisiben and Bagdad.

“Our tent was scarcely pitched, before there poured down from the northern hills a troop of about fifty horsemen, all mounted on beautiful animals, and armed with long lances. The caparisons of some of these were rich, and even splendid, and a few of the chief among the riders were also superbly dressed. They formed, indeed, by far the most respectable body of men in appearance that we had yet seen on our way. The whole of these were followers of Khalif Aga, the head of a very numerous body of horse in this quarter, and, according to report, the most powerful chieftain between Orfah and Mousul. There were among this party two little boys, who could not have been more than ten years old, but who rode with as much firmness and ease, and wielded their lances, and discharged their pistols, with as much dexterity as any of the rest; and had, if possible, still more boldness in their behaviour to strangers. They were

all Koords, and we remarked in them a roundness of feature which was much more approaching to European than to Asiatic physiognomy, particularly when contrasted with the long and prominent features of the Arabs. Their complexions too were as fair as those of Englishmen, though, in all, the eyes and hair were dark. Their dress was in fashion a mixture of Turkish and Arabian, but inclining more to the latter; many of them, however, wore gold earrings, which is rather a custom of the Indians than of either of the people before named.

“The reception given in our tent, to the chief of this party, was like that of a man to whom all owed unlimited submission. One among his suite, whose appearance was more ruffian-like than that of any other of his comrades, was selected by this chief for the duty of inspecting the goods of the caravan. This duty he performed, while his superior threw himself along upon his carpet, beneath the tent, attended by his followers, who formed a complete circle around him.

“On the report of this inspector, a contribution of two thousand Spanish dollars was fixed as the amount to be paid by the whole caravan; the proportion in which it was to be contributed by each was left to be settled among ourselves. There was at least an hour's remonstrance against this arbitrary demand of a sum which all confessed their inability to pay; and some even said, ‘Take every thing, all that we possess, and leave us naked. It will be less troublesome to us all, and effectually prevent the pillage of the next band of robbers, who, if you leave us anything remaining, will be sure to lighten us of our burdens.’ It was not these remonstrances, however, but a conviction that the original sum could not be raised, which induced the chief at length to lower his demand to two thousand five hundred piastres, or about 12½ pounds sterling. Of this, the Hadjee Abd-el-Rukhman was obliged to pay the half, and the remainder was left to be raised among the rest of the caravan. As we were now few in number, and the great mass even of these had not wherewithal to answer the exorbitant claims of these freebooters, I was compelled to pay, for my own share, no less than three hundred piastres, part of which I was obliged to borrow from the young nephew of my friend, Hadjee Abd-el-Ateef, my own ready cash being all expended, and having nothing now but my bills on Mousul and Bagdad left.

“ One would have expected, that after this sum was produced, which it was with some difficulty, and presented in hard and bright coin, they would have left us to repose in peace. But the possession of the glittering treasure served only to excite new desires for more; and it seemed to me that we were now in danger of complete pillage. The Hadjee had already laid out his presents before the chief, on his first entering the tent, after the usage of the country; and these were sufficiently rare and valuable to have been offered to a Sultan. Others were, however, now demanded; and some of the bales of goods, that had hitherto remained untouched, were even opened, to search for something worthy the acceptance of this insatiable marauder. Nothing was found that suited his caprice; and when he discovered that he himself was not likely to be individually benefited by further plunder, he began to affect a regard for justice, and desired that all ‘private property,’ as he called it, might be respected.”

V. 1. P. 451—5.

HARRINGTON AND ORMOND.

April 7, 1829.

To Miss Edgeworth chiefly belongs the praise of restoring the empire of common sense over the realms of fiction, from which it had been almost wholly proscribed since the days of Fielding and Smollett. To her is it owing that we can now meet with imaginary beings that interest without being invested with perfection, and imaginary incidents that surprise without being revoltingly improbable. We may now follow the fortunes of a heroine without the conviction that when choice is given her, she must always choose wrongly. Love has been restricted to his natural influence over human affairs, and the making or marring of a marriage has ceased to be the sole occupation for which the characters have been called into existence. Human agents are now clothed with an individuality independent of external circumstances and made to think, and talk, and act as experience teaches us they might be supposed to do on similar occasions. Whether to have thus substituted the language of nature and reason, the observations of acute and refined per-

ceptions, and the humorous delineations which a minute inspection into human character will always afford, for the insipidity and extravagance which marked her predecessors, be Miss Edgeworth's highest title to celebrity, may be debated amongst the various classes of her admirers. Her warmest eulogists claim for her the merit, not only of reforming the system, but of having carried her improvement to its highest perfection. Less partial critics, giving her credit for her indisputable qualities of good sense, good breeding and knowledge of the world, may still complain of a deficiency in much of what the high standard to which Sir Walter Scott has raised novel writing, has taught us to require. The most exalted efforts of poetry, the most lavish profusion of learning, are now no longer thought out of place in a tale of fiction; and I deem Miss Edgeworth unendowed either with the poetical faculty of complex original creation, or with the erudition which would supply the deficiency by furnishing her extensively with the inventions of others. Her characters, although conformable to nature, develop it but little beneath the surface, and under slight diversity of impulse, presenting no instance of the mingled yarn wherewith the web of the human mind is wove. Her Irish are all good-natured, humorous people: the head sometimes wrong—the heart always right; but we never see them in those alternations of light and shade, in those whirlwinds of strong passion succeeding levity and light-heartedness, which the reality presents, and which have been seized with such impressive fidelity by Mr. Banim. Whether this deficiency arise from limited power, or timidity of venturing too far in the trackless wilds of a then undiscovered region, can only be determined by the appearance of a new work. Should Miss Edgeworth however rest satisfied with the laurels she has already gathered, I should incline to predict that her name will go down to posterity among the amiable, clever and agreeable writers of their age, rather than with those master spirits who have brought the very highest qualifications to bear on their task.

The tales whose names head this article, are, by general suffrage, pronounced markedly inferior to her standard works. The first is written as an atonement to the Jews for some unfavourable mention formerly made of individuals of that sect. If there be any persons so illiberal as to deny that a Jew can be a virtuous, honest man, this story may be of use to such; but to those who do not affirm the

universality of Jewish worthlessness, and only maintain its generality, Miss Edgeworth's moral is unavailing. "Ormond" is a better written and more interesting tale. Its scene is laid in Ireland, where Miss Edgeworth is always most at home; and the character of Sir Ulick O'Shane, so admirable a representative of the now happily extinct race of Irish political jobbers, is an illustrious exception to what I have said of this amiable writer seldom portraying a class.

The following animadversion upon sentimentality is as well thought as it is well expressed.

"Hers was a kind of exalted sentimental morality, referring every thing to feeling, and to the notion of *sacrifice*, rather than to a sense of duty, principle, or reason. She was all for sensibility and enthusiasm—enthusiasm in particular—With her there was no virtue without it.—Acting from the hope of making yourself or others happy, or from any view of utility, was acting merely from low selfish motives. Her point of virtue was so high, that ordinary mortals might well console themselves by perceiving the impossibility of ever reaching it. Exalted to the clouds, she managed matters as she pleased there, and made charming confusion. When she condescended to return to earth, and attempted to define—no, not to define—definitions were death to her imagination!—but to *describe* her notions, she was nearly unintelligible. She declared, however, that she understood herself perfectly well; and Ormond, deceived by eloquence, of which he was a passionate admirer, thought that he understood, when he only *felt*. Her ideas of virtue were carried to such extremes, that they touched the opposite vices—in truth, there was nothing to prevent them; for the line between right and wrong—that line which should be strongly marked, was effaced; so delicately had sentiment shaded off its boundaries. These female metaphysics, this character of exalted imagination and sensitive softness, was not quite so cheap and common some years ago as it has lately become. The consequences to which it practically leads were not then fully foreseen and understood."

Vol. 3. P. 50, 51.

YESTERDAY IN IRELAND.

April 19, 1829.

THE remarks I formerly made and have recently revised upon "Today in Ireland," of which this work is a pendant, might be repeated upon it with little variation or inapplicability. In both, the writer manifests the traces of a cool judgment and a warm imagination; the power of dispassionately remounting to efficient causes, and of energetically pourtraying the results to which they conduce. The state of parties and of government in Ireland at two distant periods, are made the ground-work of the two stories into which this work is divided, and the consequences of the system in the demoralisation and degradation of both the oppressors and the sufferers, are bodied forth with great spirit and truth. The first and principal tale dates at the close of Queen Anne's reign, and is entitled "Corramahon:" its main incident turns upon the operation of that most hellish enactment of a hellish code; that by which the apostacy of a son made him the indefeasible heritor of his father, and an affecting and natural picture is presented of the family decay and disunion consequent upon an event originating from such a state of society. Some very high-wrought dramatic situations are interspersed, and a consistency and distinctness of individual character preserved throughout. The scene of the reconciliation of the renegade to the ancient faith is particularly spirited, both in the animation of its agents and the graphic impressiveness of its locality. The author is evidently well acquainted with the diversities of Irish scenery, and the somewhat analogous varieties of Irish character. In his exhibitions of the latter he asserts a well sustained claim to impartiality — a caviller might say *cynical* impartiality, but I think it conformable to good sense and sound philosophy to impute to a system of bad laws, worse administered, their natural and inevitable result, of barbarizing and depraving all that are under their influence. It is incongruous and absurd to allege at once that a nation is virtuous and ill-governed. The catastrophe of "Corramahon" is unexpected and striking, but surely needlessly sombre. That writer deprives himself of the powerful aid of con-

trast who makes sorrow succeed sorrow, and a narrative melancholy in its details, terminate unhappily.

“The Northerns of 1798.” forming the second story, is shorter and less diversified than its predecessor. Its plot is expressed in its title. I think that Wolfe Tone has sat for the character of the hero; both in their enthusiasm, and in the manner of their deaths, the real and fictitious heroes bear a marked resemblance. The historical part of this tale contains a clear and succinct exposition of the causes which led to the dissensions, and finally the total rupture between the presbytireans and catholics, by which the flame of rebellion in 1798 was even prematurely extinguished.

We detect this author’s country rather in his composition than in his habits of thinking. The former often exhibits passages of very high eloquence and very nearly approaching to pure taste; but the tone is too elaborate and too overtly manifesting its ambition, and the diction is chargeable with some very uncouth and needless innovations. In constitution of mind he is something like Mercutio calling plagues on both the houses, and deals heavy and indiscriminate blows both on the orangeman and the insurgent. Were it not too minute criticism, it might be properly whispered in his ear that the nephew of an earl never ranks as *honourable*.

I extract the proemial passage of the “Northerns.”

“There is for me little to admire in the o’er-ornamented environs of a wealthy or capital town. The crowded villas, the trim enclosures, the spruce knots of ever-greens and exotics—every object too fine and orderly for Nature—the very grass too green, its o’er-luxuriance suggesting not its beauty, but its filthy and artificial cause—all these, whatever be the natural beauties of the thickly planted and tenanted circle, fail utterly in inspiring one idea of the rural picturesque. The view of wealth thus overflowing, thus assuming shape, and manifesting itself in pride, is doubtless not without its charm; it may gratify patriotic, or even philanthropic feelings; and the beholder may gladden at these tokens of happiness and comfort. To me, however, the stamp of selfishness is on all this display. The current of wealth seems collected in tanks, and rivulets, and ornamental ponds, instead of being poured forth abroad to spread general fertility. Ideas of pettiness, and inutility, and narrowness, and of that meanest part of urbanity, called cockney-

ism, are connected with it ;—and, in short, neither the poet, nor the novelist, nor even the simple sentimentalist, can make use of it, for mockery, except in their imaginative tasks. ”

Vol. 2. P. 291-2.

HAJJI BABA IN ENGLAND.

May 16, 1829.

It has always been a favourite method with satirists to lash the modes of their respective countries which have no other foundation than fashion or arbitrary convention, by putting themselves in the condition of an intelligent, but unsophisticated stranger, and transcribing his impressions in his own unrestrained language. Such was the origin of the “ *Lettres Persanes* ”; those two or three light bantering romances of Voltaire ; the “ *Peruvian's letters*,” and so many others of the same class. Mr. Morier, the author of the two Hajji Babas, has made these his models so far as they pourtray the sensations of a stranger visiting Europe for the first time, in his own person and phrase, but his design was rather to point his ridicule against the country of the travellers, than to satirise that which was the subject of their observation. The author appears to be well qualified for the task he has undertaken. A long residence in Persia completely familiarized him with the character and manners of the inhabitants, and a very marked propension to the ridiculous enabled him quickly to perceive how many opportunities for mirthful situations a supposed collision of their peculiarities with European customs would strike out. Thus he freights a vessel with an imaginary retinue of the well-known ambassador Mirza Firouz, and lands them in England, where their full allotment of the vanity, irascibility and fatalism ascribed to their nation and pertaining to their religion, converts every incident into a subject for laughter,—a disposition much heightened by the oriental idiom in which every thing is described. The far-fetched and whimsical arguments resorted to for the purpose of disparaging every glaring superiority to their own nation which they witness in England,

affords a very entertaining view of the struggles of alarmed vanity against the admission of a too evident inferiority.

My appreciation of "Hajji Baba in England" is necessarily inadequate from my not having read its precursor to which it contains so many allusions as to have rendered several passages almost unintelligible to me; but I find in it sufficient to convince me that its author is a man of accurate observation and of that turn for humour which enables him to present all the product of his research with its ludicrous side outermost. I select a passage pretty much on chance. It is the commencement of the embarkation.

"We had reached the frigate all but one *maidan*, when, wonderful to behold, at the sound of a shrill whistle, out jumped hundreds of what we took to be rope-dancers; for none but the celebrated Kheiz Ali of Shiraz, inimitable throughout Asia for his feats on the tight rope, could have done what they did. They appeared to balance themselves upon ropes scarcely perceptible to the eye, ascending higher and higher in graduated lines, until on the very tip-top of the mast stood, what we imagined to be either a *gin* or a *dive*, for nothing mortal surely ever attempted such a feat. We had no sooner reached the deck whither we had all been whisked up (the blessed Ali best knows how), than instantly such discharges of cannon took place, that with excess of amazement our livers turned to water and our brains were dried up." *V. 1. P. 97, 98.*

ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN,

June 2, 1829.

I AM not certain whether my idea of a *chronicle* be a correct one: if however the characteristics of one be what I suppose them, a microscopic view of some historical epoch in which whatever of either incident or character that is too delicate and minute to find a place in the coarser and more rapid delineations of general history, is magnified and made distinct with the fidelity and animation of an eyewitness, then has Sir Walter Scott given a correct transcript of a chronicle in his present work. From a mental indolence of which there are several other plain indications, he has here

drawn almost exclusively from the resources of his reading, and left those of his invention nearly unexplored. Hence an utter subordination of the products of the imagination to the accredited realities of history pervades the entire, and creates a tame dulness of effect quite unparalleled in the writings of this author, and the more irremissible now, as it is co-existent with equally unusual violations of probability, for the purpose of disentangling perplexities themselves not very naturally complicated, and relieving the difficulties of persons not very prepossessingly endowed. But the most besetting fault is the unmeasured prolixity of the dialogue, which with all its superabundance is so defectively contrived, that it achieves neither of the ends for which alone colloquial writing is tolerable—it is neither accessory to the progress of the fable, nor to the development of the speakers' characters, but seems adopted either as the most convenient mode of filling pages with the least intellectual labour, or with the boyish ambition of displaying fine writing for its own sake. However, I shall consider the transactions and their agents in "Anne of Geierstein" a little more in detail. Of the persons who are introduced, the most interesting is decidedly the heroine, who though not very prominently brought forward on the scene, and more spoken of than speaking, is invested with a very poetical mysticism which is afterwards stripped of the supernatural additions ascribed to it in the legend, and reconciled to probability, with much dexterity. We feel esteem also for the simplicity and good-nature of the rugged Swiss envoys, and respect for the lofty bearing and devoted loyalty of the disguised Earl, though, like Diggory, he is too talkative; while we ungrudgingly permit his son to win golden opinions of all men, although he is not very particularly distinguished from the common run of heroes of romance; but with these exceptions, there is not a single character in the book calculated to claim regard or sympathy. I do not know enough of the authenticated exploits of the Free Knights to say whether the ubiquity and omnipotence attributed to them by the author are as much beyond historic warrant as they transcend the bounds of probability; but be that as it may, their introduction here is clearly a blemish to the tale. It furnishes the means of creating and removing perplexities without any assistance from the ingenuity of the author, and Sir Walter Scott's indolence has availed itself to the utmost of this convenience.

Of the incidents, the surprise of the travellers in the storm on the verge of the Swiss precipice, and the entire scene at La Ferette are the highest finished : indeed the master hand is once more clearly discernible in both, and perhaps in them only.

It needs no further analysis to explain why it is that I place the present work so decidedly below the standard of its author. It bears all the marks of a task undertaken *invitâ Minervâ*. As a piece of composition it is unexceptionable—often eminently beautiful, but it takes no hold upon the mind and does not excite a single emotion whether mirthful, pathetic, or terrible, from beginning to end.

I marked a passage which appeared to me more than any other in the work, to partake of the requisites that I usually seek for in quotations.

“ For a certain time, whatever of novelty is introduced into society is pleasing, though it has nothing else to recommend it. The Swiss were little known personally out of their own country, but they were much talked of; it was a recommendation to be of that country. Sigismund’s manners were blunt; a mixture of awkwardness and rudeness, which was termed frankness during the moment of his favour. He spoke bad French and worse Italian—it gave naïveté to all he said. His limbs were too bulky to be elegant; his dancing, for Count Sigismund failed not to dance, was the bounding and gamboling of a young elephant; yet they were preferred to the handsome proportions and courtly movements of the youthful Englishman, even by the black-eyed Countess, in whose good graces Arthur had made some progress on the preceding evening. Arthur thus thrown into the shade, felt as Mr. Pepys afterwards did when he tore his camlet cloak—the damage was not great but it troubled him.

“ Nevertheless, the passing evening brought him some revenge. There are some works of art, the defects of which are not seen till they are injudiciously placed in too strong a light, and such was the case with Sigismund the simple. The quick-witted, though fantastic Provenceaux soon found out the heaviness of his intellect, and the extent of his good-nature, and amused themselves at his expense, by ironical compliments and well-veiled raillery. It is probable they would have been less delicate on the subject, had not the

Swiss brought into the drawing-room along with him his eternal halbert, the size, and weight and thickness of which boded little good to any one whom the owner might detect in the act of making merry at his expense. But Sigismund did no further mischief that night, except that in achieving a superb *entrechat* he alighted with his whole weight on the miniature foot of his pretty partner, which he wellnigh crushed to pieces."

V. 3. P. 276-7-8.

LEGENDS OF THE LAKES.

June 7, 1829.

I THINK this work will hardly support the reputation which the "Irish fairy legends," have earned for their common author. In its profusion of poetic quotation and variety of illustrative woodcuts, it betrays strong symptoms of book-making; and the introductory and connecting passages are sometimes obnoxious to the offence of passing off pertness for pleasantry, and flippancy for wit. Besides, although an occasional sneer is vented at the over-descriptiveness of anterior lakers, Mr. Croker frequently falls into the same error himself, and without so good an excuse, as he does not affect the office of either guide or draughtsman. Like his former little work, the "Legends" derive their chief attraction from the accuracy with which the style and idiom of Irish narrative are transcribed; but the stories themselves are not very diversified or impressive; they are all of a ludicrous character and unrelieved by any of those delicate touches of nature and pathos which blend so beautifully with the legends of the Scottish Penates, and render their exploits such fitting subjects for a very peculiar and very engaging style of poetry. It is further observable that in neither of Mr. Croker's publications are we able to discern what are the peculiar attributes of those tiny creatures, those fairies and *cluricaunes*, by whose agency the supernatural incidents are performed. They seem to be actuated by no consistent spirit of either enmity or friendship towards man, but bestow favours, or machinate mischiefs to him apparent-

ly from mere causeless caprice. In general their gifts turn out perniciously from the violation of some condition which is always annexed to them; but if the hero of the tale be meritorious and compassionate, he generally succeeds after the first disappointment, in ultimately either wheedling or extorting from his unearthly acquaintance something that secures his permanent welfare. O'Donohue is naturally the character most frequently introduced into the "Legends of Killarney." He appears to have been a freebooter gifted with sorcery, but to have ultimately fallen a victim to the indiscretion of his wife. Indeed the ladies are by no means gallantly treated in these stories. Their prying into secrets; their talking or screaming at moments when the strictest silence is enjoined, generally dissolves every charm, or converts it into an engine of mischief to their friends and themselves.

I have given the preference to the following description of a Kerry school, for extraction.

"Although not a Belzoni in stature, by dint of stooping only I contrived to gain admittance among the busy inmates; and upon my entrance the hum of the students rehearsing their lessons increased to such a marvellous degree, that I could scarcely hear, or cause to be heard, the salutation which I addressed to the dread ruler of this learned abode. Mr. Lynch followed me, although on his part it required a more considerable exertion, in the way of depression, to gain admittance; but once within, there was ample room for the tallest man beneath the thatched roof which rose from the low mud walls. This roof displayed, stuck between its *scraghs and thievanes*, an ample stock of coverless Vosters, copy-books, slates, and gray goose quills, with two or three pendent racks, made of the branchy fir, for the benefit of such pupils as had either caps or hats to hang upon them. The interior of the whole cabin wore a black lackered appearance, conferred upon it by the smoke of many a winter's fire, the hearth for which stood beneath a huge vent, occupying the full breadth of one of the gables. At each side of the door was a little window about a foot square. But, on the whole, Mr. Casey's cottage was rather a respectable edifice of the description, for it could boast two real deal forms, and instead of turf benches there were three fir spars placed along the wall, each end supported by stones, in order to elevate the students to a comfortable sitting

height. There was, moreover, a table for the use of writers and cipherers. Of all these accommodations Mr. Casey seemed not a little proud, as he sat enthroned on a rush-bottomed chair, which he facetiously termed his '*Sanctum Sanctorum*.' "

V. 2. P. 143,-4.

THE NAVAL OFFICER.

June 28, 1829.

IT is a forcible illustration of the adage of the "ill wind," that the legitimate dare-devil who, by his disregard of this life and recklessness of the next, has mainly contributed to exalt the British navy to its long enjoyed supremacy, has been suited to that vocation by the very process that would most surely disqualify him for every other ; and which still preserves to the sailor his distinct, sharp and original impress, while almost all the discriminating peculiarities of every other profession have disappeared and are lost in the general fusion which the improved facilities for social intercourse have occasioned.

In the present work, the elements of the future career of the autobiographic author are skilfully laid in the details of an education combining all that could demoralise the human mind, without excepting that, from its severity, an insensibility to suffering and an obduracy of heart were generated, which in their turn created a kind of spurious courage ; but it was a courage differing from the genuine, by the opposite mental qualities from which it emanated. The one would cheerfully resign life as the purchase of honour ; the other desperately brave death as a refuge from self-abasement.

In many of our public seminaries it appears that a system of worse than plantation tyranny was formerly pursued. The task-master was more cruel than the slave-master in this, that the latter had always an interest in the conservation of the life and health of his dependents ; and again, the school-boy more resisting than the slave, because the approaches of manhood or the opportunities to

run away always kept the termination of his sufferings present to his view. Hence a war of the most vindictive character was constantly waging between the two parties; on the one side the consciousness of irresistibility by open force and of perfect irresponsibility, dictating arbitrary and violent punishments; while on the other, a sense of wrong prompted a steady system of petty annoyances sustained by every variety of fraud, cunning, meanness and treachery incident to such a species of bush-fighting.

From a course of institution of this kind was driven the hero of these volumes, when rotten before he was ripe, he exchanged the school-room for the midships, and entered upon a series of adventures in which the consistency of a character so formed is admirably preserved, and the penalties which halt after preceding guilt naturally and appropriately adduced. To a moral thus unobjectionable something might still have been added, had the picture of the handsome, spirited youth gaining laurels in the field of Venus as well as of Mars, been less animated, and the apprehension thus removed that the youthful reader might love the example more than he feared the warning. The story has at least this incontestable merit — it is written with unfailing spirit and in a polished gentlemanlike style. Its biographical sketches of naval characters are diversified and vivid, and bear that internal evidence that satisfies even those who know nothing of the original that the resemblance is faithful. The author has besides interwoven with his memoirs, some interesting accounts of the most curious and striking maritime incidents, such as storms, sea-fights, shipwrecks, the noted ceremonial at the crossing of the line and the particulars of two or three of the naval exploits which actually occurred in the British service soon after the commencement of the present century. The conclusion is satisfactory, and is naturally contrived without being foreseen.

I found it difficult to meet with any passage of sufficient compression to fit it for a quotation, although the work abounds with much of what would be well worth transcribing did the dimensions of my paper admit it. I have selected the following.

“ There is a peculiar kind of beauty among these Islands, (the Bermudas) which we might readily believe to be the abode of fairies. They consist of a cluster of rocks, formed by the zoophyte, or coral worm. The number of the Islands is said to be equal to the

days of the year. They are covered with a short greensward, dark cedar-trees, and low white houses, which have a pretty and pleasing effect; the harbours are numerous, but shallow; and though there are many channels into them, there is but one for large ships into the principal anchorage.

“ Numerous caverns, whose roofs sparkle with the spars and stalactites formed by the dripping water, are found in every part of the islands. They contain springs of delicious coolness, to quench the thirst, or to bathe in. The sailors have a notion that these islands float, and that the crust which composes them is so thin as to be broken with little exertion. One man being confined in the guard-house for having got drunk and misbehaved, stamped on the ground, and roared to the guard, ‘ Let me out, or, d—n your eyes, I’ll knock a hole in your bottom, scuttle your island, and send you all to h—I together. ’ Rocks and shoals abound in almost every direction, but chiefly on the north and west sides. They are, however, well known to the native pilots, and serve as a safeguard from nightly surprise or invasion.

“ Varieties of fish are found here, beautiful to the eye and delicious to the taste: of these, the best is the red grouper. When on a calm, clear day, you glide among these lovely islands, in your boat, you seem to be sailing over a submarine flower garden, in which clumps of trees, shrubs, flowers, and gravel walks, are planted in wild, but regular confusion. ” *V. 2. P. 65-6-7.*

SHERIDANIANA.

July 22, 1829.

It seems now to be a customary fraud with the book-makers, in their allegations of the inducements which have led them to conduct their readers by a path which all are supposed to have recently travelled under other guidance, to accuse their predecessors of leaving the objects of their pursuit sufficiently unattained to allow themselves ample scope for novelty and interest upon the same track. While so far from justifying their apology, they pillage the loaded wain instead of gleaning the field, and fill a book with scraps either

extracted verbatim, or if altered, disfigured, from the very publications whose imputed faultiness forms the vindication of theirs. The compiler of "Sheridaniana," thus, is unable to keep his pen in inactive drought because Mr. Moore, more intent upon glorifying himself than his subject, has left an insufficient representation of his gifted hero; yet whatever in the present compilation prefers the slightest claim to excellence—all that could sustain for Sheridan the character of an orator and a wit, is copied verbatim from Moore. As to the pillage from Kelly, it is of so far inferior a quality as often to make the admirer of Sheridan sigh to think that the splendid endowments lavished on him should be alloyed with propensities and practices which it would require ingenuity to distinguish from downright swindling. There are in this volume a few, and very few anecdotes neither to be found in Moore or Kelly, but they are of such mediocrity in every particular, that these writers probably either forgot them, or voluntarily discarded them from their pages. Such is *Sheridaniana*—all that it has valuable, plundered, and what is honestly come by, only so from its being what no one else would appropriate.

I should have probably dismissed a production so utterly unworthy of notice for any editorial merit, with a still briefer stricture, were it not to prefix some introduction of proportionate bulk to an anecdote I am desirous of preserving, as it contains a fact honourable to the two most distinguished men of modern times.

1813. — *Lord Byron's opinion of Sheridan.*

"The following is an extract from a diary kept by Lord Byron in 1812—13.

"Saturday, December 8, 1813.

"Lord Holland told me a curious piece of sentimentality in Sheridan. The other night we were all delivering our respective and various opinions on him and other *hommes marquans*, and mine was this:—'Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been, *par excellence*, always the *best* of its kind. He has written the *best* comedy (School for Scandal), the *best* Opera (The Duenna—in my mind far above that St-Giles's lampoon, the Beggars opera), the *best* farce (The Critic—it is only too good for an afterpiece), and the *best* address (Monologue on Garrick),—and to crown all, delivered the *best* oration (the famous Begum speech) ever conceived or heard

in this country.' Somebody told Sheridan this the next day, and, on hearing it, he burst into tears!— Poor Brinsley! if they were tears of pleasure, I would rather have said those few, but sincere words, than have written the Iliad, or made his own celebrated Philippic. Nay, his own comedy never gratified me more than to hear that he had derived a moment's gratification from any praise of mine— humble as it must appear to my elders and my betters." *P. 228-9.*

MEMOIRS OF VOLTAIRE.

July 28, 1829.

THE evidence of this book being a translation is no less clearly conveyed in the cumbrous inelegance of the style, than that its original is French is apparent in the conceited nationality of the sentiments. That Voltaire acquainted himself with Shakspeare to improve upon him, is affirmed in the careless transitory style of an admitted fact not needing enforcement, and may serve as a tolerable specimen of the fairness, modesty and good taste of the author, M. Chaudon. Far from being guilty of the profanation of comparing Voltaire to one who unimitated and inimitable, seems by the sublimity of his genius to have stood as a connecting link between mere mortals and the higher intelligences, I think it more than questionable whether Voltaire possessed any genius whatever. Without rigorously insisting that the poet should himself be "the great sublime he draws," it will not be unreasonable to infer, that for the effectual and original conception of lofty themes for the genuine and spirited incorporation of the higher qualities of our nature in appropriate shapes and in adequate language, a degree of sympathy is requisite between the artist and his work, and that the former shall not exhibit in his own person the very antagonism of those great qualities which his pen is employed in adorning.* Where this sympathy is utterly wanting, I can still conceive the wit, the man of learning,

* Such was his own opinion expressed in the following line of involuntary self-condemnation—

"Un esprit corrompu ne fut jamais sublime."

the satirist, the elegant composer, the expert imitator to remain, but not the heroic poet : not the man of genius ; the possessor of "that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert ; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates."* The mind of Voltaire was the absolute antagonism of every thing noble or exalted : it was essentially mean and despicable—a pestilent compound of vanity, caprice, rancour, sordidness and hypocrisy. His literary friendships, commencing with clouds of propitiatory incense to that vanity at once so fastidious and insatiable, were exchanged on the smallest remission of that fulsome oblation,—the slightest puncture to his self-love, for the most unrelenting hatred : and the bitterness and coarseness of his retorts proved not only the ability he acquired from his own distempered sensitiveness, of inflicting the sorest wounds upon the feelings of others, but also the reckless, insolent brutality with which he employed his weapons. When irony, sarcasm and more polished invective failed him, he resorted to sheer scurrility : no matter how disgusting the filth with which he loaded his hands, provided he could discharge any part of it upon his opponent. Nor was it enough for his acquaintances to have kept measures with him to the end of their lives. Their memories were still liable to that posthumous obloquy in which he dealt unsparingly with a dastardly baseness, I believe, almost unparalleled. Such was the man, so utterly odious, and, except for the exaltation to which his besotted countrymen have raised him, so thoroughly contemptible, to whom the French assign a rivalry with Homer, Euripides and Virgil, and for whom they arrogate a superiority to Shakspeare ! Such was the man, who to the inexpiable reproach of his country and times, acquired an influence over both never before yielded except to the highest qualities of talent and worth, while in his hands it was used as the father of evil uses his, as an instrument to corrupt, debase and destroy.

The extract I annex is of a length much too great for admission here in ordinary cases, but it contains, in the history of a single incident, so much to exemplify all those hateful qualities that I have imputed to Voltaire, that I must insert it as the confirmation of all my impeachment, by an admirer and a panegyrist.

"Of all the productions against M. de Voltaire, to which the

* Johnson.

jealousy excited by his new dignity gave birth, there were two which irritated him more than any of the rest. One was entitled, 'a Discourse pronounced at the door of the Academy, to M. de Voltaire, by the Director,' and the other, 'the Poetical Triumph.' These were both printed on the same sheet, and circulated all over Paris.

"Voltaire determined to proportion his vengeance by the effect produced on his imagination, and applied to the Lieutenant of the Police for an order to arrest the author of those two pieces, and those who had been concerned in their sale. The necessity of stopping the progress of defamation, which attacked the Academy itself, and of repressing, by a severe example, the licentiousness of those numerous detractors, who seemed every day to grow bolder by impunity, and to inundate Paris with libels, were the motives M. de Voltaire enlarged on before the magistrate, to hasten the grant of the order he solicited, and which could not well be refused him, it being impossible to foresee the use he should make of this delegated power.

"Having procured what was so necessary to the execution of his design, M. de Voltaire, the man who had so often drawn tears from crowded theatres, and who, by the universal pity he inspired, seemed to have written the history of his own heart, became in an instant the reverse of himself. Entirely given up to the impulse of passion, the fury of which he had so often combated, he thought of nothing but finding some culprit on whom all the weight of justice or of vengeance might fall.

"M. de Voltaire, having been informed by a hawker, that Travenol, the son, violin player at the Opera, had been concerned in the sale of the two satires in question, determined to have him seized. He employed an exempt of the Police in this business, to whom he delivered his writ. The house of Travenol, the father, was immediately beset by a crowd of archers. They endeavoured, to no purpose, to seize the son; he was absent. Despairing therefore to accomplish their purpose, they determined to inflict, on the father, the punishment intended for the son. Neither the age of Travenol, his infirmities, nor his innocence itself could defend him from these men, who were the ministers of the resentment of M. de Voltaire.

"In vain did he urge the rights of a citizen, in vain did he plead that guilt ought to be personal, and that the father ought not to suffer for crimes of which the son was accused. He was not heard.

Insensible to his tears, they dragged him from his home, in a merciless manner; and this old man, having no protection but his irreproachable virtue, saw himself led, like a felon, through the midst of an insulting rabble, always greedy of such exhibitions, to the prison of *Fort l'Évêque* where he was secretly confined.

“The imprisonment of Travenol was so violent and irregular, that this unfortunate old man, destitute as he was of support or acquaintance with the great, yet, found those who remonstrated in his behalf to the Lieutenant of the Police, and solicited his release. In short, some generous persons, the friends of humanity, strongly represented to that magistrate how much his order had been abused, and excited his compassion by describing the manner in which the unfortunate Travenol had been torn from his family, and dragged to prison like a criminal. Their solicitations were not disregarded. The Lieutenant of the Police inquired concerning the truth of what he was told, and the old man regained his liberty after having been closely confined for five or six days.

“An outrage so atrocious, committed on the person of a citizen, under the very eyes of justice, exposed M. de Voltaire to claims and consequences proportionate to the violence of the injury.

“Travenol, now at liberty, might reasonably hope justice would take place, as his cause was connected with that of the Lieutenant of the Police, who was also interested to punish the abuse that had been made of his authority.

“But a much more important object engaged the attention of Travenol; for informed, on his leaving prison, that his son, who had been accused by M. de Voltaire of having facilitated the sale of the satires, was still hotly pursued, he determined to sacrifice resentment to his son's preservation. He therefore immediately repaired to M. de Voltaire, clasped the knees of the man from whom he had a right to demand reparation, and requested him to pardon his son, whose whole crime was having involuntarily incurred his displeasure.

“M. de Voltaire was softened; embraced, wept over, and dismissed him, with assurances that he would protect and serve both him and his son.

“After these positive promises, Travenol thought it inconsistent with his reconciliation to insist on any amends for the injury he had sustained from M. de Voltaire. He considered what had passed

between them as a kind of amnesty, in which he abandoned his right to any recompense for the wrongs he had received; while Voltaire, on his part, engaged to stop the prosecution against his son, for the pretended crime with which he was charged. The conditions of this treaty were certainly very unequal, since Travenol remitted a real injury to M. de Voltaire, who, in return, only pardoned an imaginary offence; but Travenol considered it as an important advantage to extricate his son from his embarrassment. Strange, however, as it may appear, M. de Voltaire, in contempt of his engagement, continued to prosecute the younger Travenol with more heat than ever. The father, consequently, looked on himself as no longer bound by a treaty which could only be valid while it was equally observed by both parties. Restored to his rights by these new acts of hostility, he held it his duty to put them in force.

“ On November 19, 1746, he therefore petitioned the Court to be admitted a party in the suit pending between his son and M. de Voltaire, and concluded by declaring, it was at the instigation of the latter that he had been arrested and imprisoned five days in Fort-l'Évêque, by virtue of a pretended order from the Lieutenant of the Police. He laid his damages at 6000 livres (250 pounds) besides costs of the suit.

“ M. de Voltaire was condemned to pay, not 6000 livres, as had been demanded, but five hundred. What, however, was the most aggravating to him was, that several of the counsellors diverted their hearers at his expense. M. Mannori did not content himself with merely refuting the arguments on behalf of M. de Voltaire; he published his pleadings, which were sold in every coffee-house. In these were contained the satirical lines that had occasioned the proceedings, and which, though, before, only circulated by stealth, were now openly read by all Paris. This lawsuit may afford an excellent lesson for those literati who have too great a share of sensibility, and it is principally to warn them against resenting every little injury that we have given so minute an account of this dispute.”

P. 144-150.

IVANHOE, MONASTERY, ABBOT, KENILWORTH.

August 6, 1829.

THIS selection is entitled "Historical Romances by the Author of Waverley" — rather capriciously, as it would be difficult to assign any particular in which the superstructure is more purely on the historic basis in these tales than in "Waverley," "Old Mortality," or the "Legend of Montrose."

Of these four tales the first, "Ivanhoe," both from its anterior publication, and its interesting me less on my original perusal, was the least impressed on my memory. Nevertheless the opinion I adopted of it, as well as of the rest of the author's remoter works, has been rather confirmed than weakened by increased familiarity. "Ivanhoe" is conversant with actions, habits and sentiments so utterly passed away and forgotten, that we learn them with curiosity and interest indeed, proportioned to our confidence in their accuracy as a representation of by-gone times—but we cannot, I think, afford our full and unrestrained sympathy to the passions and fortunes of a race of beings with whom we possess so little in community. For simple human nature, supposing it could be conceived apart from, and unmodified by institution, is too abstract an essence to unite its participators into any strict bonds of fellow-feeling. The story of Ivanhoe, however faulty in plan, evinces in its execution, some of the most striking examples of Scott's pre-eminent powers in more than one of the highest departments of his art. The language is throughout more uniform and sustained than perhaps in any other single work from the same pen: the speeches of Isaac and Rebecca in especial, are the purest breathings of animated and exalted poetry. To say that the graphical passages were equally pre-eminent, would be to forget the innumerable instances scattered through all the Waverley tales, wherein the descriptive style is carried to an unsurpassable perfection. But in none of them is the exhibition of scenes of animation and tumult,

or of state and pageantry; the splendour and bustle of a tourney, or the vicissitudes and excitation of a battle or siege, more high-wrought and soul-stirring than in the magnificent composition under review.

The general suffrage assigns "the Monastery" to that inferior grade to which we reluctantly sentence so many of those later productions bearing the visible marks of negligence and haste. The management of the supernatural agent in this story is particularly clumsy, and constitutes the dead weight and blemish of the entire. To convert a spirit, the creation of fancy and superstition, into a promoter of the reformation, is surely to do little honour to the establishment of the pretended empire of common sense upon the ruins of superstition and priestcraft. And to play off a practical joke by the same agency, is fatally to lose sight of Horace's celebrated precept upon turning the Gods to base purposes. The introduction to the "Monastery" is however delightful: in the same glowing strain of homefelt enjoyment and hearty humour that marks Scott's happiest prolusions. The "Monastery" has the further recommendation of leading to

"The Abbot," which I did ever and do still deem one of the most admirable of the whole series: one whose beauties are as conspicuous in themselves and as little marred by countervailing faults, as those of any other of its illustrious lineage. Far from being, as he often is, fettered by the inflexibility of authentic story, the character and most affecting history of Mary of Scotland afforded the author a freer scope for the excitement of tender and pathetic emotions, without transgressing the limits of truth, than could have been obtained from the finest imaginary portrait. Mary indeed presents on all points a richer subject for the heroine of a romance than fiction would dare to embody, from its necessary deference to probability; and of this advantage the author has made the utmost use. The whole of the transactions at Lochleven castle have a freshness and visibility quite painful, and so wondrously are the details wrought up and concatenated, that we are almost equally affected reading them for the tenth time when the results are fore-known, as at first, when they are in some degree unexpected.

The "Abbot" possesses too the merit sometimes to be desired in Scott's novels, of evolving the main incidents by the principal agents. Roland and Catherine are not only the favoured pair who

perform the offices of hero and heroine, by falling in love ; falling out ; encountering and overcoming obstacles, and finally marrying ; but they are the persons by whose instrumentality all the weightier business of the tale is elaborated. In its nicely discriminated character and brilliant and characteristic dialogue consists another conspicuous merit of the " Abbot, " and it is not one of the least splendid attributes of the author's genius to be able in the same story and in the same scene, to pourtray characters so generically similar yet so individually marked, that no sentiment uttered by the one could with the least propriety, be transferred to the other. Thus Mary Stuart and Catherine Seyton, though both young, beautiful, accomplished and amiable women, with a high tincture of romantic heroism in common, are so contrasted that one simple sentence of the Queen flowing from the lips of the handmaiden, or conversely, would jar upon the most cursory reader as misplaced and incongruous.—This felicitous discrimination of character infuses the utmost dramatic power into the dialogue of the " Abbot. "

" Kenilworth, " though for vigour and consistency of personal delineation, and for brilliancy and verisimilitude of scenic decoration, hardly inferior to any of the collection, is yet one of Scott's least agreeable romances. All the characters except two or three, which are not drawn out into much prominence, are worthless at least, if not depraved, and Varney, the mainspring of all the evil machinery, wants discriminativeness. He is the mere, thorough-paced villain of common place writers. The most sensible defect of " Kenilworth " is however, its want of lightness and relief. There is nothing mirthful, nothing humorous, not a gleam of that " sunshine of the breast " which the author knows so exquisitely how to shed over his pages, and which would have served to make the general gloom more striking by the force of contrast. For this reason as we prosecute the story of " Kenilworth, " we become more dispirited and less interested.

ROB ROY.

August 12, 1829.

It is the most compendious, and perhaps at the same time, the most comprehensive eulogy that can be passed upon the earlier Waverley novels, to say that they not only merit, but absolutely require reperusals. When the story is interesting and the intrigue so judiciously involved as to prevent any premature glimpse of the conclusion, our attention to its development is too engrossing to allow of our tasting the accessory beauties with which its progress is accompanied; and they are often so superior to the fable on which they are woven, that a second reading, by confining our attention to them, becomes even more delightful than the first, when they are but cursorily noticed. Combining, as he does in his writings, the conjoint attributes of the Italian and the Flemish schools of painting, your first examination of Sir Walter Scott's works is engrossed by the invention, the outline, the colouring; that more striking and conspicuous department of the art for which the Italian masters were famed, and it is not until you make a nearer approach and a more careful and leisurely revision, that you can distinguish and relish the exquisite delicacy and minuteness with which, in the Flemish taste, the entire canvass is filled up.

These remarks I think peculiarly applicable to the present tale. The plot turns upon the means of sustaining the mercantile credit of an establishment brought into jeopardy by the machinations of a villain, who was leagued with a freebooter, for political purposes, and sought to convert national convulsion into personal and selfish advantage. He is successfully counterplotted, exposed, and finally assassinated by his betrayed accomplice, and thus the only impediment is removed to the happiness of all the deserving parties. Out of so simple a fable is a romance constructed which in force, variety and truth of character—in situations sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes partaking of both—in poetical and graphical delineation of inanimate nature—in fluent and harmonious

diction, sparkling with the purest imagery—with the happiest play of wit and fancy—the most unrestrained current of humour at once strong, mellow and high-flavoured, may vie with any composition of any author. Of the constituent personages, Rob Roy himself occupies the foreground among the serious, and Baillie Nicol Jarvie among the comic groupings. But though the most prominent, I doubt if the latter be the most highly finished impersonation. The character of Andrew Fairservice, a compound of impudence, knavery and officiousness, conveys a satire upon the inferior Scots more keen and poignant, because more truth-seeming and good-humoured, than anything Macklin ever penned.

The following is the opening of the third chapter of the first book : it expatiates very charmingly upon a very common sensation :

“The slack sail shifts from side to side,
The boat untrimm'd admits the tide ;
Borne down adrift, at random tost,
The oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.”

GAY'S FABLES.

“ I have tagged with rhyme and blank verse the subdivisions of this important narrative, in order to seduce your continued attention by powers of composition of stronger attraction than my own. The preceding lines refer to an unfortunate navigator, who daringly unloosed from its moorings a boat, which he was unable to manage and thrust it off into the full tide of a navigable river. No school-boy who, betwixt frolic and defiance, had executed a similar rash attempt, could feel himself, when adrift in a strong current, in a situation more awkward than mine, when I found myself driving, without a compass, on the ocean of human life. There had been such unexpected ease in the manner in which my father slipped a knot, usually esteemed the strongest which binds society together, and suffered me to depart as a kind of outcast from his family, that it strangely lessened the confidence in my own personal accomplishments, which had hitherto sustained me. Prince Prettyman, now a prince, and now a fisher's son, had not a more awkward sense of his degradation. We are so apt, in our engrossing egotism, to consider all those accessories which are drawn around us by prosperity, as pertaining and belonging to our own persons, that the

discovery of our unimportance, when left to our own proper resources, becomes inexpressibly mortifying. As the hum of London died away on my ear, the distant peal of her steeples more than once sounded to my ears the admonitory 'Turn again,' erst heard by her future Lord Mayor, and when I looked back from Highgate on her dusky magnificence, I felt as if I were leaving behind me comfort, opulence, the charms of society, and all the pleasures of cultivated life."

Vol. 1. P. 53-4-5.

DE PILES'S ART OF PAINTING,

AND LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF 500 PAINTERS.

August 13, 1829.

MR. DE PILES has divided his work into two compartments—the didactic and the narrative. In the first he affects to lay down rules both for artists and connoisseurs, and to give a metaphysical analysis of the qualities by which perfection in the execution, and skill in the estimate of painting are attainable. It is difficult to fancy anything more ridiculous than the pomp with which he enunciates the most vapid truisms in sounding but senseless maxims, which when divested of their gaudy attire, and stated in simple propositions, amount but to the identities that to be a good painter, you must have the requisites of a good painter, and to be a good judge, the requisites of a good judge. But let him speak for himself. "*The Attitudes, or postures of the figures,*" he says, "*should be natural, expressive, vary'd in their actions, and contrasted in their members.*" Again—" *The Draperies should be well set, etc.*—Afterwards—" *Landskips should not be encumber'd with too many objects, and the few that are there ought to be well chosen.*" And so on. Such are a few of his golden rules: happy the artist who reposites them in his mind as the direction posts of the royal road to painting! The second part contains a biographical notice of some three hundred eminent (but not all the *most* eminent) painters, with a critical examen appended upon the manner and merit of the most illustrious of them; and the entire is wound up

by a disquisition upon the six several schools or styles of painting, which he thus enumerates. 1. The Roman, or the style founded on the antique. Of this school the great masters were M. Angelo Buonarrotti and Raphael. 2. The Venetian, pre-eminently distinguished for colouring. Of this school Titian was the head. 3. The Lombard, combining something of the two others. Correggio and the Caracci were the great models of this style. 4. The German. 5. The Flemish, distinguished by its skill in *chiaro-oscuro*, variety of colouring and mellowness of pencil. And 6. the French, remarkable (if I may presume to pronounce,) for exaggeration, gaudiness and false taste. The first reflection that obtruded itself upon me on concluding these memoirs, was on the immense difficulty that attended the ascertainment of the artist of almost any painting, from intrinsic evidence, and the presumption we are all guilty of, who having seen a few specimens of each of the famous masters and formed some idea of their general manner, venture to affirm or deny the genuineness of any individual picture. This follows not only from the total changes of manner undergone by many of them more than once in their practice, but also from the amazing powers of imitation evinced by others. Titian alone painted in four distinct manners at different stages of his art, and Andrea Del Sarto produced such a copy of Raphael's picture of the three Cardinals De Medici, that Julio Romano, who drew the draperies for Raphael, refused to be persuaded of the counterfeit, and asked if he did not see his own strokes. Van Dyck also repaired some injuries which befel a piece of Rubens, his master, with such fidelity, that the artist himself never discovered the difference and only remarked on seeing his pupil's retouching, that he liked the picture then better than he did at first.

It would seem to me that M. De Piles is most infelicitous in conveying his critical distinctions to his readers, but I prefer this charge against him with the same diffidence with which he himself would probably criticise an original of which he had only seen a very bad copy. He has fallen into the hands of a translator who is avowedly not an adept in the graphic art; who moreover has a most John-Bullish contempt for every thing French, his original perhaps included, and who besides, is a very inelegant writer of his own vernacular, as his dedication and supplement demonstrate. Poor De Piles seems to have been a very sincere and devout catholic; always expressing much edification at such of the artists as devoted

their talents to religious subjects, and it is very laughable to observe how regularly his anonymous renderer's spleen boils over in a note, when he meets any of these allusions to the obnoxious tenets in the text.

The following preface to what the translator terms an "Essay towards an English school of Painters," but which is in fact a very crude and meagre sketch of the lives of some few artists of all nations who happened to have executed works in England, will sufficiently illustrate some of the comments I have made upon him.

"The Reader will easily perceive that though the French author has not vouchsafed to do justice to the Painters of our nation, yet he has very little to say of those of his own; and the last sentence of his book agrees well with the account of the French Painters, and the French taste, that had not the authors of that nation been the vainest writers in the world, when they talk of their countrymen, he would not have been guilty of so ridiculous a flourish in their favour. The best of their Painters were much more inferior, in all parts of the art, to our Van Dyck, than Van Dyck was to Raphael and Titian. In the following pages we shall prove, that the English Painters and Paintings, both for their number and their merit, have a better claim to the title of a *school*, than those of France. But the French would fain thrust themselves into all the honourable places, as well in the arts and sciences, as in the Empire of Europe."

HURD'S

MORAL AND POLITICAL DIALOGUES.

Aug. 17, 1829.

WHETHER the celebrated persons who are represented as the contributors to these several dialogues, did really hold the opinions here ascribed to them and express them upon the occasions, in the company, and in such phrase as are set forth in this collection, or whether the compiler, in the common way, has merely recommended his own sentiments under the sanction of illustrious names,

is not very easily ascertained from internal evidence. Mr. Hurd himself strenuously maintains their authenticity, while a perceptible uniformity of style would seem to impugn it. However that fact may be, the dialogues have great inherent merit. The topics are all interesting and diversified; treated with great ingenuity, candour and learning, and embellished with a uniform purity of language and elegance of composition. The first Dialogue turns upon "Sincerity in the commerce of the World," the speakers being Dr. Henry Moore and Edmund Waller. The abstract question soon digresses into a vindication by the latter of his own conduct in the disgrace he fell into with the Long Parliament. His defence and argument upon the general question is, I think, more specious than convincing, but it is cleverly urged, set off by much rhetorical ornament, and abounds in historical anecdote and criticism of a very entertaining quality. The second Dialogue is on "Retirement," and is supported between Cowley the poet, and Dr. Thomas Sprat, afterwards Bishop of Rochester. Like the preceding, it deviates from the primary question into a personal one, and contains a specification of the reasons which induce the poet to decline the invitation conveyed to him by the other dialogist from Lord St. Albans, to forsake his retirement and enter again upon the scenes of active political life. The third and fourth Dialogues treat of "the Golden age of Queen Elizabeth," and are attributed to the honourable Robert Digby (merely a bellows-blower), Dr. Arbuthnot and Addison. The first of the two turns upon the amusements and manners of that age—debating especially the nature of the masques: the second discusses the character and policy of Elizabeth herself. The unpopular side in this dissertation is taken by Addison, and I think triumphantly sustained. He proves from the circumstances of Europe in general, as well as those of her domestic government, that the juncture in which she reigned was the most fortunate for the success of her arms and policy that could be selected from the whole annals of history, and that the seeming difficulties which sometimes beset her, were, when justly examined, so many points in her favour. Thus he divests this virago of the claims to political sagacity so loftily asserted by her eulogists, and pressing home all the well-known instances of the weakness and wickedness of her domestic conduct, perfectly succeeds in showing up the monster in her true deformity. The fifth and sixth Dialogues are likewise political—on

“ the Constitution of the English government.” The speakers are Sir John Maynard, Mr. Somers and Bishop Burnet. In the first of the two, the old parliamentary Maynard takes the lead in establishing the position that the principles of freedom were always recognised in the English feudal constitution; and in the sixth and last Dialogue the Bishop leads the way (to the same assessors), in arguing that the few despotic reigns which occur in the English history were exceptions to the principle before laid down by Maynard, and not proofs of a contrary one, and that thus the Revolution made but slight innovation in favour of liberty, effecting little more than the establishment upon a more solid basis, of those rights which were always inherent in the nation, although theretofore secured by insufficient sanctions.

The extract I append is taken from the concluding part of Waller's account of his concessions to the parliament : it exhibits a lively and satirical picture, containing almost as striking a resemblance of the hypocrisy and fanaticism of modern times as it probably does of those of the puritanic age.

“ But all I have told you was only a prelude to a farther, and still more necessary act of dissimulation. Had the house been left to itself it might possibly have absolved me on the merits of so large a confession and so lively a repentance. But I had to do with another class of men, with holy inquisitors of sordid minds, and sour spirits, priestly reformers, whose sense was noise, and religion fanaticism, and that too fermented with a leaven of earthly avarice and ambition. These had great influence both within doors and without, and would regard what had hitherto passed as nothing, if I went not much farther. To these, having begun in so good a train, I was now to address myself. I had studied their humours, and understood to a tittle the arts that were most proper to gain them. The first step to the countenance and good liking of these restorers of primitive purity was, I well knew, the most implicit subjection both of will and understanding. I magnified their gifts, I revered their sanctity, I debased myself with all imaginable humility : I extolled them with the grossest flattery. Having thus succeeded to my wish in drawing the principal of these saints around me, I advanced farther : I sought their instruction, solicited their advice, and importuned their ghostly consolation. This brought me into high favour : they

regarded me as one who wished and deserved to be enlightened : they strove which should impart most of their lights and revelations to me. I besought them to expound, and pray, and preach before me ; nay, I even preached, and prayed and expounded before them. I outcanted the best-gifted of them ; and out-railed the bitterest of all their decriers of an anti-christian prelacy. In short, it would have moved your laughter or your spleen to observe how submissively I demeaned myself to these spiritual fathers ; how I hung on their words, echoed their coarse sayings and mimicked their beggarly tones and grimaces. To complete the farce, I entreated their acceptance of such returns for their godly instructions, as fortune had enabled me to make them. I prevailed with them to give leave that so unworthy a person might be the instrument of conveying earthly accommodation to these dispensers of heavenly treasures, and it surpasses all belief with what an avidity they devoured them ! It is true this last was a serious consideration, in all other respects the whole was a perfect comedy, and of so ridiculous a cast, that, though my situation gave me power of face to carry it off gravely then, I have never reflected on it since without laughter."

P. 29,30.

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

August 19, 1829.

THIS tale is in the author's later and deteriorated manner. It is declamatory and redundant : neither evincing the poet's contemplation of nature, nor the humorist's observation upon man. The story too, like the Spanish comedy, rather carries on its intrigue by the deception of the senses, than evolves it in the play of the passions, affections and infirmities of its actors. Of these, the most laboured is perhaps the puritan Bridgenorth ; a man compounded of those materials which the author is fond to combine : an understanding naturally vigorous ; sterling probity ; and kindness of nature, warped and perverted by fanaticism : a devotedness to an extravagant sense of public duty overbearing the nearer considera-

tions of self and friends and all temporal interests. Such a character in the hands of so fine a scrutinizer of humanity as Scott, is well suited to the exhibition of the lights and shadows of our essence with their full contrasted effect. The strife between the claims of kindred and friendships, and the rugged dictates of imaginary moral duty, exhibits some fine touches of the skilful analyser of moral phenomena, and in Balfour, Magdalen Grøeme, Bridgenorth and I think in many other instances, characters composed of such ingredients are of frequent recurrence. Fenella, in this tale, would partially redeem it from the level prosaic stamp which marks it, except that she bears upon her the demerits that almost always belong to mere plagiaries. She does not seem to blend and accord with the rest, nor does the part she was to sustain appear to have been previously planned and arranged. Hence, with all the facility which her genius, her opportunities, and her devotedness to his wishes gave her of accomplishing Christian's vengeful purposes against her benefactress, she leaves her destruction unattempted until nearly the close of the story, and then fails in it. Nevertheless it is in the portraiture of the rapidly varying emotions of this singular being that the strongest illapses will be found of that talent which shines dimly and fitfully throughout "Peveril of the Peak." The praise of composition, that praise to which the author in his most careless and uninspired moods is never disentitled, belongs to this work. The lofty and enthusiastic sentiments with which it is fraught, find suitable transfusion in that un-failing current of beautiful and expressive diction so habitually flowing from this mighty master of language.

If any thing were wanting to convince me of the utility of these notices, it would be the fact, that from having borrowed the sentiments of another instead of having embodied my own on my original reading, the story and incidents of this tale had almost totally faded from my memory, and it now met my attention with almost all the freshness of novelty.

The following is a powerful etching of an individual of a species with which we are all tolerably familiar : a brutal pampered animal clad in the human form.

"This official had originally been a very strong and square-built man, of large size, but was now so overgrown from over-feeding perhaps, and want of exercise, as to bear the same resemblance to

his former self which a stall-fed ox still retains to a wild bull. The look of no man is so inauspicious as that of a fat man, upon whose features ill-nature has marked a habitual stamp. He seems to have reversed the old proverb, and to have thriven under the worst affections of the mind. Passionate we can allow a jolly mortal to be; but it seems unnatural to his goodly case to be sulky and brutal. Now this man's features, surly and tallow-coloured; his limbs swelled and disproportioned; his huge paunch and unwieldy carcase, suggested the idea, that having once found his way into this central recess, he had there battened, like the weasel in the fable, and fed largely and foully, until he had become incapable of retreating through any of the narrow paths that terminated upon his cell; and was there compelled to remain, like a toad under the cold stone, fattening amid the squalid airs of the dungeons by which he was surrounded, which would have proved pestiferous to any other than such a congenial inhabitant."

Vol. 3. P. 255-6.

QUENTIN DURWARD.

Sept. 1, 1829.

IN the little introductory proem prefixed to this tale, in which, like a highly finished vestibule to an ordinary structure, there is more of taste and fancy than in the entire body of the work which follows, we are introduced to the story of *Quentin Durward* as to one of these memoirs which the excellence of French writers in that style has raised to a class of literature very conspicuous in itself, and almost exclusively appertaining to that nation. According to the admitted requisites of a memoir, *Quentin Durward* turns wholly upon a few historical incidents nearly contemporaneous. The capture of the Bishop of Liege's castle; the visit paid by Louis XI. to Charles the Bold of Burgundy, and the investment and recapture of Liege, compose the leading events of the tale, which disposes of the subordinate particulars with as much brevity, and portrays personal characters with as much generality as is compatible with a clear exposition of the more important incidents. Taking it according to

its profession, Quentin Durward is entitled to a respectable place in its department. The historical transactions around which it revolves and the personages by whom they were actually promoted or originated, are represented with, I believe, as much fidelity as spirit. The character of Louis XI. the prime machinator of the intrigue, supplied fortunate materials for an author who wished to transgress probability with historic warrant. The contradictory qualities of that extraordinary prince : his abject superstition opposed to his personal courage—his suspicion and cruelty coexistent with almost intuitive discernment of character and unflinching equanimity—his talents and weaknesses in short, so equally proportioned and nicely blended, give likelihood and consistency to conduct which would seem incongruous and incredible if ascribed to any less singular origin. In addition to the merit of delineating a character of so very complex a structure, with much vivacity and force, this tale has further the recommendation of a tone of abiding, jocund elasticity, and a buoyancy of animal spirits very congenial to the country where its scenes are laid. This, I think, is the extent of the praise to which Quentin Durward is entitled.

TALES OF THE CRUSADERS.

Sept. 10, 1829.

OF the two stories which compose these volumes, the first, "The Betrothed," has greatly the preponderance of merit. Its incidents and characters, affected by supernatural influences, partake of that tender solemnity with which a similarity of cause so beautifully shades those of "the Bride of Lammermoor." If it is unchequered by the variety which the latter presents, and unrelieved by any of the ludicrous scenes which some critics deem the blemish of that charming tale, "the Betrothed" has at least the advantage of a termination both unexpected and satisfactory. Of the characters, the most effective is the Constable, Hugo de Lacy; a man concealing a tender heart and most disinterested virtue under a rugged and obdurate surface. Some very high-wrought and touching pathos is

elicited from the struggles between the softness and delicacy of his genuine nature and the inflexibility and harshness of his assumed one, when under the pressure of heavy affliction. As Campbell says of Ulysses in the *Odyssey*, "When he is moved, our conception of what he feels is heightened by our remembrance of the fortitude which gives way to his feelings, and the torrent of his sensations appears deeper and stronger for the mass of resistance which it overcomes."

The concluding story, "The Talisman", is perhaps as a whole, the most feeble and unimpressive of the entire series from "Waverley" down to the "Chronicles." The author has deprived himself in it of his two powerful accessories, scenery and manners. The remote age of Richard I., the modes of thought and existence belonging to which period are so much unknown to us, requires all minuteness of characteristic traits to be merged in broad generalities; and the sterile scenery of the Dead Sea affords no scope for any varied or pleasing delineation of inanimate nature. Besides, the history of the principal performers in the events of this tale, is too notorious to admit of the feeling of any anxiety about the perils they encounter. The assassin aims his blow at Richard Plantagenet without raising an emotion in the reader, because every reader knows that Richard did not fall in Palestine by an assassin's hand; and the issue of Saladin's rivalry with the Scottish Knight is equally unapprehended, because we are aware that Saladin did not wed an English Princess. Thus it is that history if too prominently presented fetters the flight and paralyses the vigour of the poetic wing. To sustain the flagging interest of the "Talisman," the author has resorted to a series of masquerading delusions, which, when we think of the spells he can conjure for the captivation of his reader, we witness as we might a pantomime by the author of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. The loves in the "Talisman" partake of the languor and frigidity which beset its general tenor. Chivalrous love was indeed of too abstract and devotional a character to find an echo in the bosom of a matter-of-fact modern. It was the "*broderie de l'imagination*," but wholly devoid of "*l'étoffe de la nature*," to use Voltaire's definition. To crown its catalogue of faults, "the Talisman," is unmercifully colloquial. This is the peculiarity of Scott's crude and hasty productions, and is perhaps a certain mark, if all other were wanting, of that very crudeness and haste themselves.

Johnson in his life of Butler, sets this in a clear light. "It is indeed," he says, "much more easy to form dialogues than to continue adventures. Every position makes way for an argument, and every objection dictates an answer. When two disputants are engaged upon a complicated and extensive question, the difficulty is not to continue but to end the controversy. But whether it be that we comprehend but few of the possibilities of life, or that life itself affords little variety, every man who has tried knows how much labour it will cost to form such a combination of circumstances as shall have at once the grace of novelty and credibility, and delight fancy without violence to reason."

LETTRES DE MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Sept. 19, 1829.

THE last letter of this collection bears date nearly a hundred and forty years ago, and Madame de Sévigné is consequently amply entitled to the benefit of the statute of limitations enacted by Horace, that consummate literary legislator, for those whose fame has survived their century. The name of Madame de Sévigné is still the inseparable concomitant of whatever idea we form of perfect letter-writing; as one unrivalled in her own language, and with the single exception of Lady Wortley Montague, unapproached in ours. Without instituting a minute comparison between the merits of these famed epistolarians, I think that supposing the pleasure derivable from both to be equal, the palm of superiority in genius must be awarded to the French candidate, because her correspondence is the more independent of all adventitious attraction. Lady Montague travelled through countries, at her time scarcely known, and even now that the erratic propensities of Englishmen have brought all the habitable globe so directly under view, the indefatigable curiosity and remarkable good fortune of her ladyship in obtaining an inspection of what the Easterns most jealously guard from intrusive eyes, afforded her opportunities for curious narration possessed by no subsequent visiter, and which impart an abiding interest to her

narrative. Madame de Sévigné has none of these aids. She never leaves France, a country presenting little or nothing on which to found entertaining description, and even though it did, nothing of the kind could properly find a place in a correspondence between natives. She addresses herself to those to whom a hint, a word, a nickname was sufficient to convey a whole picture. Her overflowing tenderness to her daughter, venting itself in every page, although it finds a thousand varying forms of phrase, yet is forced to adopt identical terms in the unceasing repetition of the same sentiment. With all this obscurity—with all this monotony, it is nevertheless impossible for a reader of taste or sensibility to approach the last letter of the correspondence without the same feelings with which the wayfarer regards the advances of the darkness that is to shut out the cheerful day from his path. To express in few words the inimitable charm of these letters, they are models of tenderness, playful humour and good-breeding; so perfect in each quality; so exquisitely does the style reflect the mood of the moment, that it is hardly possible to say in which tone of mind she is the most delightful. There is throughout a nationality, a something that without the aid of any local description, so completely transports us into French scenery and French society, that we should feel its absence as the want of one of the great attractions of the style. It enhances our intimacy with Madame de Sévigné: it recommends to our friendship not merely a charming woman in the abstract, but a charming woman of that stamp which is peculiar to France: it gives propriety to sentiments that would be misplaced and disagreeable if uttered by a person of any other country. To exemplify:—That perennially gushing tide of tenderness for her daughter would appear suspicious and exaggerated if emanating from one of our reserved countrywomen, who with their national phlegm are always expected to feel so much more than they express; indeed so astonishing is its intensity, that perhaps the difference of climate and manners could scarcely vindicate its perfect sincerity, had not Madame de Sévigné attested it by dying the victim to her maternal affection. The suddenness of her transitions “from grave to gay, from lively to severe,” might wear the semblance of levity, notwithstanding the matchless grace with which the tints are blended and either the lights increased or the shadows deepened, as suits the occasion; but here again we are reminded that these are the effusions of a national temperament

more vivacious and mercurial than our own. For this reason also it is that the enthusiastic adulation paid to that hoary reprobate Louis XIV. ; the disproportioned eagerness with which the gossip, the dresses, the amusements, the scandal of the time are expatiated upon, bear so strongly upon the times and authenticate so happily one's preconceived notions of the pompous days of the *Grand Monarque*, that far from tiring us, they are valuable as affording the very best illustration of their era.

I extract one of the innumerable variations upon that ever fresh theme, the writer's maternal affection.

“ Je crois que je ferai un traité sur l'amitié ; je trouve qu'il y a mille choses qui en dépendent, mille conduites à éviter pour empêcher que ceux que nous aimons n'en sentent le contrecoup ; je trouve qu'il y a une infinité de rencontres où nous les faisons souffrir, et où nous pourrions adoucir leurs peines si nous avions autant de vues et de pensées qu'on doit en avoir pour ce qui tient au cœur. Enfin, je ferais voir dans ce livre qu'il y a cent manières de témoigner son amitié sans la dire, ou de dire par ses actions qu'on n'a point d'amitié, lorsque la bouche traitreusement assure le contraire. Je ne parle pour personne ; mais ce qui est écrit est écrit.”

Lettre CCCCL.

JOHNSON'S WORKS.

Oct. 9, 1829.

To pass over unnoticed an extent of composition of which the perusal has engaged so many hours, would be as unjust to my own diligence on the one side, as on the other it would be trifling and tedious to undertake a long and elaborate analysis of an author whose congeniality to my tastes : whose susceptibility to feel, and power to impart trains of reflection which often suggest themselves to me, have recommended his sentiments to my especial regard, impressed them on my memory, and obtained for them so numerous recorded tributes in these volumes. As the difference between the intellectual faculties of various men may be said to consist rather in

their ability to express, than in their power to feel, I shall not be chargeable with presumption in comparing myself with Johnson, and in tracing the extreme pleasure I experience from his writings to a certain affinity of constitution and similarity of fate between us. We are both alive to the painful consciousness of suffering under a rigorous destiny, and both anxiously striving to control our impatience, and solace our afflictions by recurring to that supreme disposer, by reliance upon whose final allotment we humbly promise ourselves requital for all mortal woes. I feel my own thoughts echoed in the gloomy morality of his meditations; and my own regrets for mis spent time eloquently enforced in his remorseful retrospections upon his by-gone years. But how much are these lamentations deepened in my heart when I apply to myself, who have literally lived to no purpose, the self reproaches of a man who, however short he may have fallen of the standard of duty by which, as an austere and scrupulous christian, he measured his conduct, yet compared with the bulk of his fellow-creatures, has so ably combated in the cause of virtue and religion and bequeathed such mighty monuments for the amelioration of posterity!

Thus it is that every increase of intimacy with Johnson's writings affords me more and more of what is responsive to my own better thoughts, and attaches me the firmer to the writer whom inward experience teaches me to place at the very head of the scrutinizers of the human heart; of those moral mediciners who best "minister to the mind diseas'd," by applying palliatives where they cannot heal, and by referring the lacerated spirit to that place where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

SMOLLET'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

Oct. 19, 1829.

I AM scarcely entitled to give this work a place in my catalogue of books read: for hurrying over printed pages with impatient inattention or wandering ideas, is only fulfilling the mechanical part of

reading; while so far from tending to its proper effect of storing the mind with facts, it gives a habit which prevents the reception of any. As well as I could judge from a perusal of the nature I have avowed, Dr. Smollet writes with rather a national than a political bias. Like a true Scotsman, he keeps the massacre of Glencoe continually before his view in narrating the reign of King William, and seems inclined to render this hero of protestantism a very scanty measure of favour indeed. With the economical tendency of his country also, he inveighs strenuously against the lavish expenditure of public money which marked the two first Hanoverian reigns, and censures, with equal force and justice, the political system which was then introduced, of making Great Britain a principal in all the continental wars in which the safety of the King's electoral territories was involved. Dr. Smollet's naval habits have led him to enlarge very copiously, not only on the exploits of the British fleets, in which as long as we only asserted claims to maritime superiority, all our strength was supposed to consist, and which therefore form a fair subject for historical detail, but also on the insulated achievements of small squadrons, or even single ships, a habit which renders the author sometimes chargeable with prolixity and minuteness. Another peculiarity of an opposite kind belonging to this history, is its almost total inattention to the affairs of Ireland, and to the penal laws passed in the reigns of Anne and George I. against the people of that nation.

OEUVRES DE MONTESQUIEU.

Oct. 20, 1829.

OF the component parts of these volumes, I was already acquainted with the "*Lettres Persanes*," and the "*Grandeur et Décadence*," and as the vagrancy of attention which I had to complain of in the preceding article, still beset me through the perusal of these works, I feel myself unwarranted in pronouncing anything like a confident opinion upon the author's remaining and most celebrated performance, "*L'Esprit des Lois*." Conscious of

this inability at the time, I intended to supply the deficiency of original remark by still further abridging a synopsis of the design and argument prefixed to it by D'Alembert. But even this has been omitted. As a suitable extra-warning to diffidence in such circumstances, I noted the following passage from Montesquieu's "Défense."

" Dans les livres faits pour l'amusement , trois ou quatre pages donnent l'idée du style et des agrémens de l'ouvrage : dans les livres de raisonnement on ne tient rien , si on ne tient toute la chaîne."

Défense de la troisième partie.

I cannot however avoid intimating a suspicion that in the *Esprit des Loix*, the author rather deduces theories from facts than facts from theories, and thereby commitst he error of confounding the accidental and circumstantial with the permanent and essential state of things. For example :—England being at the time of his publication an exclusively maritime power, her armies unknown, and her territorial acquisitions inconsiderable, Montesquieu argues as if this situation were the inevitable result of her political and geographical position, whereas succeeding events have proved, by putting this nation into a directly contrary condition, that its former one was merely casual and temporary. The same remark is applicable, I believe, to many other nations, for whose circumstances he has not assigned the true causes; in as much as these circumstances are changed while the causes remain unaltered.

In the style of all Montesquieu's didactic works there is the axiomatic terseness of a professed theorist, by which one is often led to suspect that the opportunity of uttering a well-poised antithesis or a striking maxim, seduces him to the enunciation of propositions of too broad and unqualified a generality. Epigram is indeed rather the attribute of wit than of philosophy. With such a groping, guessing sort of notice has my dissipated attention compelled me to take leave of a work, the notoriety alone of which should have earned for it a very different treatment.

BOOK OF THE BOUDOIR.

Nov. 13, 1899.

WHEN Voltaire was asked why he did not write annotations upon Racine, he replied, "What could I say upon the various passages, but *sublime, pathetic, beautiful, etc.*? For something of a kindred reason do I abstain from anything like minute observation upon the "Book of the Boudoir;" for what commentary do its successive paragraphs invite but the various phrases of reprobation conveyed in the terms, *insolence,—falsehood,—baseness,—vulgarity,—ingratitude,—affectation—and vanity*? In short, the sum total of the odium merited by the most ostentatious display of "the trifling head and the corrupted heart." If "wonder be involuntary praise," Lady Morgan must however be allowed her meed of encomium, in venturing the experiment she has made upon public endurance. That a creature neither old enough for natural dotage, nor youthful enough for the delirious vanity which precocious success naturally engenders, should actually commit to the enduring permanency of print, such damning evidences of whatever in character, amiability and good sense would eradicate, or at least, discretion and good taste would keep concealed, affords a melancholy example of how literary empiricism may acquire at least temporary success, and how far the morality and discernment of the reading public are yet short of a respectable elevation. Perhaps the most disgusting peculiarity of this farrago, is the exhibition it makes of the most grovelling meanness and most outrageous insolence coexisting in the same nature. We can tolerate adulation to the great, contemptible as it is, if the contact it purchases have the effect of softening the manners and conferring that urbanity of deportment which is the peculiar distinctive of the patrician classes. Or the fearless and rather offensive bearing which may, and often does result from a consciousness of superior talents, may be forgiven in its indiscriminate erectness towards every class, and its indifference to the claims of mere heraldic or adventitious elevation. But when we witness

the crouchings to temporal exaltation compensated by arrogance towards the less favoured of fortune; when we contemplate a new and glaring instance of the tyranny which slavery engenders, then is the overboiling of our indignation only subdued by the chill of our scorn. That a person so organized (as she would say herself,) as Lady Morgan, should have obtained any footing in what she calls emphatically *society*, is a proof that although the names of jester and buffoon are no longer recognised on the roll of our great households, the taste for them in their proprietors is nowise extinct, nor their "occupation gone."

But enough and to spare of this nauseous olio. These memoranda were undertaken for the purpose of commemorating those literary productions whichever for the utility of their matter, or the elegance of their style, I deemed worthy of attention. Of the present it can be truly said, that it affords nothing which *aut ignorantibus nocet, aut scientibus juvat*.

A CHRONICLE OF THE CONQUEST OF GRENADA.

Dec. 22, 1829.

I WAS about treating this work as what it professes to be, the *bond fide* translation of an ancient Spanish manuscript, when I accidentally discovered in the summary critique of a magazine, that the *worthy Fray Agapida* is an ideal personage, and that to Mr. Irving belongs all the credit or the blame of this his original work.

The events detailed date from the year 1482, when the final war against the Moors commenced by the capture of their important fortress of Albama. For ten successive years of uninterrupted conflict, the Christians obtained all the substantial advantages both in the open field and in the leaguer of cities, having only suffered some unimportant defeats through sudden surprises or unfavourable ground; and in 1492 the Moorish capital of Grenada, and the domination of the race

itself in Spain, sank together under the attack of Ferdinand in person, after an establishment of I believe about five hundred years from their first settlement. When the hostilities commemorated in the "Chronicle" commenced, the Moorish throne was occupied by a king whose cruelty towards his own son Boabdil El Chico, instigated the latter to take up arms against his person and authority. The king's cause was espoused by his brother, surnamed from his warlike exploits *El Zagal*, or the conqueror, and thus, while the empire was sinking under the invasions of a powerful enemy without, it was exhausted, and the moment of its downfall accelerated at least, if not entirely produced, by dissension and strife within. Unlike the other barbarous nations which generally compose their intestine feuds when pressed by a common foe, the Moors prosecuted their civil wars with a fierceness which the conquests of the Spaniards seemed rather to irritate, so that by granting protection and friendship to each party in turn, the politic Ferdinand was able to destroy them all in detail.

The same authority that informed me of the imaginary existence of the nominal chronicler, assimilates the execution of the work to Froissart. I cannot judge of the comparison, but I consider the present a very tedious, dull production indeed. It has the fault of the old romances of Knight-errantry, that the issue of the combat is never doubtful : that the narrative is conversant with warfare and nothing else, and that the warriors are not individualised, or otherwise distinguished than as they belong to the different sides. Thus the bravery of the Moorish champions is always cruel and sanguinary, while that of the Christians is uniformly knightly and generous. The composition of this work naturally partakes of the monotony of its topics. It affects the artlessness and amplitude of detail which characterize the old romances, and seems to have copied the peculiarity of their style with the same success as the wearisomeness of their matter. The subjoined extract is taken from one of the most interesting passages, and relates to the frustration of a night attack on the Christians, by their previous intimation of the design.

"At length the appointed hour arrived. By order of the Moorish king a bright flame sprang up from the height of Bentomiz; but El Zagal looked in vain for the responding light from the city. His impatience could brook no longer delay : he ordered the advance of the army to descend the mountain defile, and attack the camp.

The defile was narrow, and overhung by rocks. As the troops proceeded, they came suddenly, in a shadowy hollow, upon a dark mass of Christian warriors. A loud shout burst forth, and the Christians rushed to assail them. The Moors, surprised and disconcerted, retreated in confusion to the height. When El Zagal heard of a Christian force posted in the defile, he doubted some counterplan of the enemy. He gave orders to light the mountain fires. On a signal given, bright flames sprung out on every height, from great pyres of wood prepared for the purpose. Cliff blazed out after cliff, until the whole atmosphere was a glow of furnace light. The ruddy glare lit up the glens and passes of the mountains, and fell strongly upon the Christian camp, revealing all its tents, and every post and bulwark. Wherever El Zagal turned his eyes, he beheld the light of his fires flashed back from cuirass, and helm, and sparkling lance; he beheld a grove of spears planted in every pass, every assailable point bristling with arms, and squadrons of horse and foot, in battle array, awaiting his attack. ” *Vol. 2. P. 27, 28.*

HALL'S TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA.

Dec. 31, 1829.

WITHIN a period of fifteen months from his first landing at New-York to his final embarkation from the same port, Captain Hall traversed an extent of territory including almost the entire of the republican states, and also a considerable portion of the British settlements in Canada. After visiting the Northern and Eastern states, he passed into Canada; then proceeded to the Southern or slave states on the Atlantic, crossing the newly incorporated one of Alabama to Louisiana. From New-Orleans he steamed up the Mississippi to its junction with the Missouri, and then crossing the Alleghany mountains, by land conveyance, returned by that way to New-York. To a man like Captain Hall, uniting penetration and curiosity with the very eminent qualifications he possesses of trans-fusing his observations into popular and entertaining narrative, this was an ample field for the materials of quite as bulky a book as

has resulted from it. But from a timid apprehension of giving offence, which is constantly avowed and ever apparent; almost all particularisation of American character and manners is avoided, and thus one of the sources of the most amusing and illustrative departments of topography is closed up; and thus the dry political dissertations which are poured forth with inexhaustible fluency, appear still more prolix and heavy from the absence of all contrasting lightness and relief. After all the earnest protestations of candour, good-will and liberality of disposition towards the Americans, with which Captain Hall opens his first volume, I found it impossible on advancing deeply into the book, to avoid the suspicion that this journey was undertaken with some suppressed design, and the work composed with a deeper object than to give a mere transcript of impartial observations. Had the Reform question been in much repute in England at the time of Captain Hall's outset, or any spirit adverse to the British constitution then spreading abroad, I should at once have concluded that his mission was assumed for the purpose prepossession of throwing all the weight of his authority into the scale of the old system, and strenuously urging that of Transatlantic innovation against the beam. But unless his ambition be "again to slay the slain," this solution will not be satisfactory, as radicalism seems to be extinct at home. Whether the motive of these travels were to furnish a text book to the friends and fautors of the *nolumus mutari* system, or whether the author's preconceived opinions gave that bias to his mind which wrought the same effect, it is certain that the hand of fellowship has been eagerly stretched out to him by this party, and his reasonings confidently appealed to as giving the death blow to at least so much of the reform scheme as embraces annual parliaments and universal suffrage, which jointly form, I believe, the keystone of the arch. Taking every position of Captain Hall relating to the American government to be perfectly incontrovertible—assuming for a moment the more than questionable fact, that from education, habit and singleness of purpose, he was capable of judging accurately and stating truly, still is his authority I conceive, not a feather weight against these or any other tenets of the English reformers. True it is, he pointedly condemns the principle of universal suffrage adopted in America; points out clearly and enforces cogently the practical inconveniences of the constant renovation of the Congress, and displays a formidable pre-

sentment of the turmoil and excitation which the oft recurring elections create and foster. But all these evils spring from causes which do not, nor ever can exist in England, and accordingly their effects are so totally inapplicable to that country, that the instance of America must be left totally out of the question, either as warning or example to the home innovators. The evil arising from the short tenure of the representative function in congress is this—that among the imperfectly educated people of America, it is almost impossible to find a representative who is at all conversant with the theory or business of legislation upon his first entering congress; that the period of two years for which he continues a member is too short to allow him to acquire sufficient experience, and that even the benefit of the little he does gain in the interval, is lost to the public by the necessity of his then vacating in favour of a successor in the same state of darkness from which he is only just emerging. Again, the efficient cause of the tumult and heat of an election, is the effect which it will have upon the all absorbing presidential question, and not at all by the mere incidental consideration of attachment or hostility to the candidates or to their general politics. The prevailing law of excluding all members of the administration from seats in congress is especially prejudicial to public business in America, as it tends to perpetuate the incapacity of the actual members by withdrawing from their deliberations men of practical knowledge and habits of business. Now it is evident that none of this reasoning is worth the ink which conveys it, as bearing upon the question of parliamentary reform at home. For, 1. I believe it was never openly contemplated to abridge the present life-tenure of the crown, or to make it elective—in other words to supersede it by a presidential executive: consequently the great object which the American elections contemplate, could have no existence. 2. The class of intelligent and well-educated persons in England is too crowded for the possibility ever to arise that there should be found any lack of them to supply the quickest parliamentary rotation; and the admitted aristocratical bias of the people makes it almost equally impossible that however extensively the franchise might be diffused, any large number of members would be chosen except from this class. 3. Supposing that the members of the British government were excluded from seats in parliament, that intelligence and knowledge of business which would be found in its members, would render all

the evils emanating from this peculiarity in the American constitution, either trifling or evanescent. The arguments therefore against the British reformers, and I believe they are many, must be sought for either in the immutable nature of abstract reasonings, or in experimental tests which afford a parallelism quite wanting in the instance of Republican America. But my rapidly filling pages remind me to hasten to some of the other branches of Captain Hall's communications.

At a town called Sing-Sing, between New-York and Albany, the author visited a prison of which he gives a very clear, minute and interesting account. It appears that in the state of New-York there is either an actual abolition of capital punishment, or an infrequency in its infliction nearly equivalent. The convicts in this prison are therefore, many of them, criminals of the most inveterate cast. The discipline pursued is as follows : in the morning the convicts are marched from their solitary cells to work, in parties consisting of persons of the same craft. At meal times they are paraded back to their cells and eat their food within them in perfect solitude, and at night they are finally locked up in the same isolation. The leading principles of this system, are unbroken silence at all times, and solitude, except at the hours of work. Prayers are read by a chaplain morning and evening, and every Sunday he makes domiciliary visits to such of the convicts as desire to see him. This discipline is enforced when necessary, by the whip, and as rewards should obviously be proportioned to punishments in opposite cases, Captain Hall suggests a striking improvement in recommending that in proportion to the continuance of good conduct and obedience, the duration of the imprisonment should be abridged. He subsequently visited another prison at Philadelphia, conducted on a different and rival plan, the distinctive peculiarity of which was its enforcing perpetual solitude. The preference is justly given to the former plan, which from the inferior number of recommitments within a given period, is proved to be the most conducive to the reformation of the culprits.

After the constitutional question, that which engrosses the greatest number of Captain Hall's pages, and is in itself of paramount interest, is the subject of American slavery. The importation of slaves from transmarine countries is prohibited throughout all the states, and their employment in the Northern parts is falling into

disuse, in consequence of the inadequacy of the soil to provide them with maintenance. Hence they are become an extensive and lucrative branch of traffic between the Northern and Southern states, and the author is of opinion that owing to the insalubrity of the general climate and of the rice cultivation in these latter, slave labour must either continue in them, or the plantations be abandoned and the country consigned to waste. Although the irresponsibility of the slave master leaves nothing to be said in defence of the laws relating to this subject, and makes the condition of these unfortunate beings precarious indeed, they yet appeared to Captain Hall to be generally contented, and subject to as good treatment as was consistent with the obtaining of adequate labour from them. Providentially, experience demonstrates that when the cupidity of the planter instigates him to overwork his negroes, they either run away, or droop and die : thus disappointment ensues, and humanity, like honesty, is found the best policy.

There are some geological theories introduced which are at least striking and ingenious. That of an immense flood or deluge from the North-East is one of the most favourite, and the author conjectures that Long Island was formed out of the successive deposits of wood, sand and other alluvial matter left by the torrent as its force was lost by dispersion in the open sea.

From his nervous timidity of giving offence, and his surely prudish observances of social reserve, we can only discover, that in their manners the Americans, though hospitable and obliging to strangers, levy the most unmerciful tribute upon them in the shape of sustenance to national vanity, that it is possible to conceive. I think however that the flattering deference thereby implied to the traveller's sentiments might have obtained for this habit more toleration than the gallant captain allowed it.

This is a long article, and yet I close it with the consciousness of having left unnoticed innumerable topics of curious and original discussion with which these volumes are replete. The Indian cricket match—the falls of Niagara, although these are treated rather in the figure of *Siopësis*—the academic courses—the emigration question—all these would well repay an examination. I proceed however to transcribe a portion of the description of one of those almost magical metamorphoses, by which a pathless forest becomes transmuted at once into a flourishing and populous city.

“ A gentleman—one of the assembled inhabitants—had been kind enough to accompany us from the agency, to show off the Lions of this singular place. The first thing to which he called our attention, was a long line cut through the coppice-wood of oaks. This, our guide begged us to observe, was to be the principal street ; and the brushwood having been cut away, so as to leave a lane four feet wide, with small stakes driven in at intervals, we could walk along it easily enough. On reaching the middle point, our friend, looking around him, exclaimed, in raptures at the prospect of the future greatness of Columbus—‘Here you are in the centre of the city!’ In a very short time—he assured us — it would be no longer a mere path, but a street sixty yards wide, and one league in length ! By keeping a bright look out as we proceeded, we could detect other similar cuts into the forest, branching off at right angles to this main avenue, as it was to be called. As yet, however, these cross streets were only indicated by a few stakes driven in by the surveyors.

“ After threading our way for some time amongst the trees, we came in sight, here and there, of huts made partly of planks, partly of bark, and at last reached the principal cluster of houses, very few of which were above two or three weeks old. These buildings were of all sizes, from a six feet box or cube, to a house with half a dozen windows in front. There were three hotels, the sign belonging to one of which I could observe, was nailed to a tree still growing untouched, in the middle of the street. Another had glazed windows, but the panes of glass were fixed in their places merely for the time, by a little piece of putty at each corner. Every thing indicated hurry. The direction and width alone of the future streets were adhered to, but no other description of regularity could be discovered. As none of the city lots were yet sold, of course no one was sure that the spot upon which he had pitched his house would eventually become his own. Every person, it seemed, was at liberty to build where he could find room, it being understood, that forty days after the sale would be allowed him to remove his property from the ground on which it stood, should he not himself become the purchaser. In consequence of this understanding, many of the houses were built on trucks—a sort of low, strong wheels, such as cannon are supported by—for the avowed purpose of being hauled away when the land should be sold. At least sixty frames of houses were pointed out to me, lying in piles on the ground, and

got up by the carpenters on speculation, ready to answer the call of future purchasers. At some parts of this strange scene, the forest, which hereabouts consists of a mixture of pines and oaks, was growing as densely as ever; and even in the most cleared streets some trees were left standing, I do not well know why. As yet there had been no time to remove the stumps of the felled trees, and many that had been felled, were left in their places; so that it was occasionally no easy matter to get along. Anvils were heard ringing away merrily at every corner; while saws, axes, and hammers were seen flashing amongst the woods all round. Stage-coaches, travelling waggons, carts, gigs, the whole family of wheeled vehicles innumerable, were there. Grocery stores and bakeries were scattered about in great plenty—and over several doors was written, ‘Attorney at law.’ ”

V. 3. P. 283-4-5.

EMMA.

Jan. 7, 1830.

THE repeated encomiums passed on Miss Austin's novels by many competent authorities, gave me a desire to judge of them for myself, and the above was the result of my application at the library for one of them. The two first volumes afforded me a very high degree of pleasure. They contain a number of characters well discriminated and in perfect consistency: the story pertaining to them is intricated enough to stimulate curiosity to an interest in its development, without any elaborate complication. Indeed the whole book is remarkable for the facility and smoothness of its execution. The third volume I think a falling off: the dialogue which is clever and characteristic in the two first, here gives place to elucidations which are rather prolix and minute, and the final event is prematurely visible. The moral of “Emma” is apparently the evils of match-making, and the disappointments and failures of the very well-meaning heroine who tries in this shape to make her

friends happy after her own fashion, illustrate with much truth-semblance and pleasantry this fruitful theme. Taking the present specimen as a fair criterion of Miss Austin's talents, I incline to rank her below Mrs. Brunton, Mrs. Opie and Mrs. Perrier, as a novelist. She neither evinces the tenderness and pathos of the two first, nor the indefatigable spirit and jocular humour of the author of the "Inheritance."

I have turned over an entire volume without finding any passage of that insulated character that would fit it for transcription.

LETTERS TO JULIA.

Jan. 10, 1830.

THIS little poem, written by a Mr. Luttrell, is an avowed paraphrase and amplification of Horace's ode commencing "*Lydia, dic per omnes.*" The mutual friend of a coquettish widow and her fashionable suitor, remonstrates with the lady upon the unkindness of her treatment to her admirer, and pathetically describes his abandonment of all the fashionable addictions of which he had theretofore been one of the most eminent votaries, through despair from her cruelty. Incidental to this expostulation is conveyed a light, sketchy delineation of the occupations and amusements of the fashionable "young men about town." The legislature of Almack's, the park, Melton hunting, Parisian gaming-tables, all come under review, and are touched off in appropriate traits of easy gaiety.

Although I have generally seen the epithets *clever*, *amusing* and others of a like encomiastic character, prefixed to the mention of these letters, and had my curiosity to read them thereby excited, I think their claim to merit is moderate indeed; and when the inevitable comparison with "Horace in London" is once suggested, likely to be altogether disallowed. In Mr. Smith's admirable travesty, the varied and closely-copied metre, the ingenious parallels and poignant satire, all keep the spirits in a most agreeable state of excitement. Mr. Luttrell's poem, on the contrary, ambles on in the undeviating regularity of the octo-syllabic line: the parallels are few and strained, and where any passage approaches to exactness of

translation, it is commonly either obscure, or misplaced ; so that the best portions of the poem are those where the model is altogether left out of view. To the letters is appended a poem on Ampthill park, by the same author. It is of course descriptive, but its imagery was not impressive upon me. I subjoin the best passage I could find in the volume : it is upon the subsidence of a very loquacious into a very taciturn man.

“ Now is the clatter of his mill,
With all its rush of waters, still ;
His chimes are motionless become,
His ear-subduing larum dumb.
Now seldom seen, more seldom heard,
He shrugs—but utters scarce a word,
And bears about, like muzzled hound,
A tongue chained up, without a sound. ”

P. 17.

TRAITS OF TRAVEL.

Jan. 15, 1850.

THESE three volumes are divided into perhaps twenty separate articles, consisting of anecdotes, essays, sketches scenic and personal, and tales, of different lengths and various merit. Even although the preface had not declared that some of these had already been inserted in the current periodicals, and that I had not myself recognised more than one as having formerly appeared in the “ New Monthly Magazine, ” their general style and sentiment would be a sufficient ear-mark to identify them with the lighter and flashier literature of our ephemerals—of that species of composition whose characteristic is the substitution of counters for coin ; of tinsel for gems ; of the fleeting foliage for the solid trunk, which marks an art already arrived at that pitch of over-refinement, when the primary materials being exhausted, it is obliged to reproduce them under the guise of novel and striking decoration. Of the writers whose productions attest this rather unhealthy condition of our ephemeral literature, Mr. Grattan is one of the most conspicuous and fruitful.

He is a standard-bearer among the crowded ranks of the authors who, destitute of the raw material of original thought, have adopted a manufacture veiling its intrinsic flimsiness, under elegance of finish and superficial gloss. The merits accordingly of Mr. Grattan's productions are in the ratio of their restrictedness to subjects falling within the range of external observation. An anecdote of which the value consists in the art with which it is told ; the succession of incidents which constitutes a tale ; above all a minute scenic description, admit of this perennial *copia verborum*. As employed by Mr. Grattan, it is indeed highly efficacious in imparting animation and verisimilitude to his landscape ; so much so that I know of few writers who evince a more talismanic power of conjuring up the general aspect of scenery whose distinguishing features may be vanishing from the reader's mind in the dimness of long passed or casual inspection. In one word he is a remarkably *graphical* writer, and exerts this his great power not like some more highly gifted authors, by impressing by one happy effort, a single, stamp-like transcript of a portrait or a view, but by several repeated touches, all delicate, minute, and accurate, and combining by their joint agency to effect a pleasing, resembling picture. It is in the essays and generalisations—whatever calls forth theories and abstractions, that the faults of this verbose style supereminate. Out of its obscure and mazy involution it is impracticable to elicit one clear, determinate proposition. Take as an example the character of the " Glutton " in this collection ; what does it achieve but the presentation of a series of loathsome images displaying individual bestiality, but tending in no way to designate a species ? The " Nightmare " is even still a more signal failure, because treating upon a subject of abstruse metaphysical phænomena, the want of terseness and precision in the style makes " confusion worse confounded, " and appears like the mimicked ravings of insanity. As illustrations of the suitable employment of Mr. Grattan's powers, I would name " A bone to pick, " as a very well told anecdote—" the Veteran, " and some of the Belgian sketches, as vivid and correct delineations of national scenery, and of costume both personal and (if the figure be not too strong,) mental.

The following portrait of a reduced gentleman is equally admirable whether it be an imagination or a reality.

“ As I sat opposite to the door, I could fully remark the figure and physiognomy of this new comer; and time enough was given me for observation, in consequence of the little attention he seemed to excite in those of the party, who, sitting at my side of the table, must have seen him as well as I did. The president, whose talents have long since been promoted to a seat of more dignity, was in the act of spinning out a story of excellent texture, the web of which was so cunningly wove, and so dexterously coloured, as strongly to excite the audience, and make them the more indifferent to the stranger's interruption, or *intrusion*, as I must call it. But he bore in his whole aspect evidence of a still better reason for their indifference. He was poor!—a poverty however that was clearly that of a gentleman. His look showed none of the meanness which walks hand in hand with the wretchedness of the lower classes of Irish. His black coat was quite threadbare, and its fashion of some years standing; but it fitted him, and did not hang loosely on the wearer, like an ill cut but not to be mistaken badge of beggary. His other garments, worn and faded as they were, did equal credit to his tailor, for they showed to all possible advantage all that was good in the remnant of a once muscular and manly form. The visible verge of the stranger's linen was clean, but bearing the tinge of Time's or Jealousy's jaundiced eye: the frill was puffed out into a display, which seemed less for ostentation than the convenience of covering the time-worn edges of the flowered vest; and the cravat, of the same citron hue, was tied in a profuse expenditure of ‘ bows and ends,’ according to the plethoric taste of the last century, which may still be observed in the old dandies who carry their old fashions into this. The scanty remains of the stranger's hair were frizzed and dressed, and the scalp and forehead thickly larded with a paste of pomatum and powder, which covered the baldness, but could not *conceal* it, and placed the deformity of affectation upon the gracefulness of age. The hard and sunburnt hat, held in one hand, was profusely powdered at the inside of crown and leaf, but no more able than the cranium it whilom covered to throw dust in the eyes of the observers, as to its actual “ age and quality. ” A gold-headed cane dangled by a string from the wrist of the other ungloved hand, which displayed more than one ring of ancient workmanship, that seemed to suit the long and well-formed fingers. An eyeglass showed itself full three quarters out from between the lower

buttons of the vest, and a black ribbon fastened it round the neck.

“The face of this reduced gentleman told a long story, I thought, of anxiety, and pride, and suffering. The features were of the common stamp of Irish provincial gentility—intelligent, marked, and somewhat coarse: but the whole expression was softened down into an air of weather-beaten composure: not as if a sudden blow of fate had marked the countenance with woe, but as if time and care had been long chiselling it together, in lines more numerous than deep. A multitude of wrinkles covered the forehead and cheeks; the mouth was drawn downward, and a deep frown more deeply shadowed the naturally sunken eyes. I well know that after-knowledge of events often deceives us into the belief that we have traced character at first sight; but I cannot help thinking that I read in this face, on this first and last time of my beholding it, the tale of lingering and gradual disappointment, by which it had been furrowed.”

“*A bone to Pick.*” Vol. 1. P. 9, 10, 11.

JOURNEY FROM CALCUTTA TO EUROPE BY EGYPT.

January 17, 1830.

THE preface to this short narrative, so fully unfolds its plan, and affords so fair a specimen of the agreeable, unaffected style in which its very sensible remarks are conveyed, that I shall not occupy its place by any further observation of my own than to add that the journey and narrative emanating from it, are the performance of a Mrs. Charles Lushington, a lady whose name as an author never before reached me, but who, it is to be hoped, will receive sufficient encouragement for the valuable rarity she has given the public, in a simple, perspicuous relation of the incidents of her travels, to stimulate her to publish something more in the same style, for which her foreign residence has doubtless supplied her with sufficient materials.

“When the author left Calcutta, she promised several of her friends there to keep a journal of the occurrences of her Journey,

and to furnish them with copies of it to enable them to judge of the practicability of the undertaking, especially by ladies, and to determine whether the enjoyment would be likely to compensate for the inconveniences inseparable from travelling alternately by water and by land, and partly through countries unprovided with the comforts and facilities of civilized life. In short, she was expected to give a faithful estimate of the comparative advantages between the long tried passage round the Cape of Good Hope, and what was familiarly called the "Journey overland through Egypt."

"In order to comply with these wishes, she kept very detailed notes of all that happened throughout her Travels; but when the time of copying them arrived, she found that it required some immediate stimulus to compel her not to defer the task of arrangement and transcription. Frequent inquiries respecting Egypt, notwithstanding the numerous excellent books already published relative to that country, induced her to think that a narrative of her Journey in a plain and unpretending form, might be presented to the Public, and her engagements to her distant friends be thus fulfilled. These considerations led to the present publication."

Preface.

MEMOIRS OF JAMES HARDY VAUX.

January 21, 1830.

THE additions appended to this personage's name in the title page, of "a thief and a swindler," promise more of amusement than edification from the subsequent narrative. This promise is not falsified, as it would be difficult to mention a work of higher rank for its interesting qualities. With an animation and variety quite captivating, these memoirs recount a series of adventures, in the course of which are exhibited to view the habitudes and achievements of a portion of society of which prudence will sufficiently warn every one to avoid a more experimental knowledge.

The morality of such a production as this may be fairly questioned. To the well regulated and reflecting mind, which can extract wholesome nutriment from every weed, the effect of such a work must be altogether beneficial. Putting the "still small

voice " and its monitions upon the horrible state of a total estrangement from our maker, out of the question, it is impossible not to be struck with the inadequacy with which the most successful course of hostility to social law, requites the incessant anxiety, watchfulness and tension of mind requisite to the evasion of detection and punishment. But upon the plastic and unformed mind of youth the case may be widely different. So much of interest is awakened in the progress and consummation of this plunderer's differentingenious plans—such an irrepressible desire, that depraved as he is, he may escape the fangs of justice which he always kept extended for him from the instant of his respective escapes from their grasp, that in the toleration of the man, a toleration for his crimes is involved, and when that is once fully granted, it may be justly doubted whether upon sufficient temptation, an imitation of them might not result.

The maxim—"Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes, emollit mores," was emphatically negated in the instance of this autobiographer. With all his propensity to low company and low vices, he received a good education, and always endeavoured to cultivate the tastes which it implanted in him. Thus he says that a considerable portion of his swindling gains was applied to the purchase of instructive books, and it appears by his easy, perspicuous style and copious and well-turned expression, that his addiction to literature was by no means a fruitless or unrequited attachment.

I select for a specimen of the execution, (not of the *writer* but of his *work*), the account of his first or maiden theft.

"I had in my youth been passionately fond of cocking, a sport for which the county of S—has been always famed; and though so young, I had constantly kept several cocks at walk, unknown to my parents, so that I had acquired a considerable share of experience and knowledge on the subject. One day, when I was sent with some muslins to wait on a lady in the environs of Liverpool, near the canal, I accidentally passed a cockpit, where a great crowd was assembled; and I understood that a grand main was about to commence. Elated at this pleasing intelligence, I hastened to execute my commission; and returning to the house, entered it, and leaving my wrapper of goods in care of the landlady, I ascended to the pit and took my seat. The company was, as usual, of a motley de-

scription, but there were many genteel persons. I ventured a few trifling bets at first, with various success ; but at length an opportunity offering, which I considered as next to a certainty, I laid the odds to a large amount, flattering myself that by this stroke of judgment I should be enabled to figure away with increased éclat among my gay companions. After I had so done, greater odds were still vociferated, but in a moment the scene was changed ! The fallen cock, in the agonies of death, made a desperate effort, and rising for a moment, cut the throat of his antagonist, who was standing over him in the act of crowing with exultation on his victory ! The latter immediately fell, choked with the effusion of blood, nor did the victor survive him many moments. The whole pit resounded with acclamations, and the discord which ensued beggars description. I was not the only sufferer by this revolution of fortune ; many others had laid higher odds than myself, and to a much greater amount. I was soon surrounded by my creditors, to whom I disbursed every shilling I had about me, among which were some pounds I had just received from the lady for goods, and for which I had given her a receipt. I was still something deficient, for which I pledged my honour to one of the parties, giving my address, and promising payment on an early day. I now returned home, filled with remorse and shame ; but as the first false step of a young person insensibly leads to another, I added to my guilt by concealing the affair from my employers, and directed them to book the articles the lady had selected. I had a degree of false shame about me, which rendered me incapable of confessing the truth and promising amendment, or all might still have been well. In the evening I had recourse to the bottle to drown my chagrin ; and I determined to purloin a certain sum every day, in the course of my attendance upon retail customers, until I had liquidated my debt of honour ! Then, I vowed to stop and reform. Delusive idea ! how little did I then know my own weakness, or the futility of such resolutions in a young mind ! And who, that once begins a career of vice, can say to himself, ‘ Thus far will I go, and no farther ?’ After I had discharged my engagement, I found a small sum must be raised for pocket money and other exigencies, as it would be above two months before I could expect a remittance.”

P. 13, 16.

SCHILLER'S HISTORY OF THE THIRTY YEARS WAR.

Jan. 28, 1830.

It is a remarkable argument in favour of the system of perfectibility, that those alterations in human affairs springing from the progress of mechanical science, or effected by moral agency, which at first view might seem most to tend to the destruction of mankind, have practically a directly contrary effect, and prove conducive to the preservation of human life and to the augmentation of human happiness. The invention of gunpowder is one instance of the fact, and the present method of warfare, compared with that adopted a century and a half or two centuries ago, is another. The French revolutionists, as a sort of set-off to the carnage they perpetrated at home, have the merit, if unintentional beneficence be a merit, of introducing this amelioration in the sanguinary science, by which a single campaign and often a single battle determines the fate of a war or an empire, and the industrious inhabitants of the theatre of combat are spared the ruin attendant upon protracted strife. Thus the republican arms under Napoleon wrested Italy from Austria upon the fields of Marengo, and the same tactics prostrated the empire itself upon the field of Austerlitz. Prussia sunk lifeless at Jena; and Bonaparte himself was annihilated in his turn, and his great empire subverted, with the same completeness and finality at Waterloo. In older times, on the contrary, no single campaign, however vigorously conducted, was conclusive. The number of small states into which Europe was parcelled, through their apprehensions of the victors, always supplied to the vanquished power the means of recruiting its forces and of readjusting that balance which the ambition of conflicting interests kept in perpetual disturbance. Hence the contest continued; ever bloody, ever undecided, until at last when the treasures of the belligerents became utterly exhausted, their territories ravaged, and their subjects ground down equally by friend and foe—then the genius of war withdrew and like Juvenal's Messalina,

Lassata viris, nondum satiata, recessit.

A peace ensued, which was observed until one of the subscribers regained sufficient strength to encourage him in the hope of breaking it with advantage. Then was the flame rekindled; again did it burn out its aliment; and once more did it smoulder in a general peace. Of this species of strife, the thirty years war forms one of the most striking and terrible instances. It is scarcely necessary to say that this sanguinary era commenced in 1618, or that it took its rise in an insurrection of the Bohemian protestants who elected the unfortunate Elector Palatine Frederick V. their King, in opposition to the Emperor Mathias. By various alliances—by that of the Hungarians under Bethlem Gabor; of the Danes under their King, Christian IV.; of the Saxons and some of the minor states of Germany; of the Swedes under Gustavus Adolphus and his successors in the command; and lastly of the French under the administration of Cardinal Richelieu, the insurgents were able to keep the field against the parent state aided by Spain and Bavaria, for the unprecedented period which comprises the duration of this war.

This work was my introduction to Schiller as an historical writer, and in my opinion it will not be found a justification to him for leaving his earlier and more celebrated career. In reviewing one of Scott's historical works (I believe it was,) I had occasion to observe on the unfitness of writers of imagination and fancy to adventure within the precincts of authentic narrative. Whether the causes which I then ventured to suggest for this incompatibility be well or ill assigned, I will not now consider, but I think Schiller may be adduced as a corroboration of the fact. His history is written with a palpable and avowed anti-catholic bias: he always identifies himself with the protestant party; terming their defeats "unfortunate;" their successes "happy", and their opponents uniformly "the enemy." This is surely the bearing of a partisan and a factionary, not of one who professes to hold up the lamp of truth, steadily and impartially. The style also is faulty and unequal: sometimes figurative and declamatory; sometimes cold and prosaic. The character and exploits of Wallenstein are the best executed portion of the work. The author's selection of this remarkable man for one of his own dramatic heroes marks a sympathy in his fortunes sufficient to account for this superiority. Had the treasonable overtures of Wallenstein been met with confidence, and acted upon with spirit, it appears inevitable that the house of Austria

must have ceased to reign. But it is a providential antidote to the poison of perfidy, that the distrust which it engenders often tends altogether to frustrate, and always to weaken its mischief.

In affirmance of the theory making human character the result of circumstances, this age abounded with eminent military commanders. At the head of these, both in field and in council, was pre-eminently, Gustavus Adolphus. His generals Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar and Baner were also conspicuous. Count Tilly, a Bavarian; Piccolomini, and above all, Wallenstein, were those who best maintained the reputation of the Imperial arms.

The ensuing quotation evinces some of that unevenness of style which I have already noticed.

“ The formidable monarchy which Charles V. and his son had unnaturally united, comprising the Netherlands, Milan, and the two Sicilies, and the extensive possessions in the East and West Indies, under the administration of Philip III. and Philip IV. was verging to its decline. Exalted to a sudden degree of greatness by the possession of unfruitful treasures, this power was now under the influence of a visible decay, deprived as it was of agriculture, the natural support of states. The conquests in the West Indies had reduced Spain itself to poverty, while they enriched the markets of Europe; the bankers of Antwerp, Venice, and Genoa, were negotiating with the gold which was still buried in the mines of Peru. For the sake of India, Spain had been depopulated, while the treasures drawn from thence were wasted in the re-conquest of Holland, in the chimerical project of changing the succession to the crown of France, and in an unfortunate attack upon England. But the pride of this court had survived its greatness, and Terror still brooded over the forsaken Den of the Lion. Distrust of the Protestants suggested to the ministry of Philip III. the dangerous state policy of his father; and the reliance of the Catholics in Germany on Spanish assistance, was as firm as their belief in the miraculous legends of the martyrs. External splendour concealed the inward wounds which were wasting the life of this monarchy; and the belief of its strength remained, because it still maintained the high tone which it had held in its better days. Slaves in their palaces, and strangers even upon their own throne, the Spanish nominal Kings still gave laws to their German relations, though it may be doubtful if the

support they afforded was worth the dependence by which the Emperors purchased their assistance. The fate of Europe was decided behind the Pyrenees by ignorant monks or interested favourites. Yet, even in its debasement, such a power must always be formidable; a power which yielded to none in extent; which through custom, if not from the steadfastness of its views, adhered unalterably to one system of policy; which possessed well-disciplined armies and consummate generals; which did not scruple to employ the dagger when the sword failed; and converted even its ambassadors into incendiaries and assassins. What it had lost in three quarters of the globe, it now endeavoured to regain to the eastward, and all Europe was at its mercy, if its long cherished views were successful, and a junction with the hereditary dominions of Austria between the Alps and the Adriatic could be effected.” *V. 1. P. 150-1.*

LIFE OF LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY.

Feb. 1, 1830.

THIS publication is owing to the virtuosism and research of Horace Walpole, and in my opinion it requires something of a congenial taste to his;—a tincture of that gusto which appreciates rather by the rarity of the object than its intrinsic worth, to partake in his exalted admiration for this product of his diligence. In a prefatory memoir, of which, being incomplete in the copy I read, I do not know the writer, it is said that the reader will find the history of Don Quixote in the life of Plato. The meaning of this obscure, and perhaps contradictory sentiment, is only educible from Lord Herbert's own succeeding commentary, which indeed displays a curious medley of solid and original reflections and extravagantly improbable adventure. If we are to credit all the promptings of his lordship's untiring and undissembled vanity, he will appear as one of the survivors of the round table: a hero before whose prowess every antagonist yielded in the field and every fair one melted in the bower. If he does not go the length of Sir Sampson Legend in claiming the paternity of his majesty of Bantam, he pretty broadly insinuates that it was his own fault if his blood did not chance to bestow

a tributary rill upon the stream of British royalty. It is rather repugnant to the delicacy of chivalric gallantry, however, to proclaim the whole circumstances of an attachment which one of the court ladies conceived for him, and even to prefix her name in full. It appears that notwithstanding the credit he arrogates for his continence respecting the Queen (of James I.) and this unfortunate Lady Ayres, he did not always emulate the chastity of a Scipio, and one of his dissertations maintains that transgressions in this kind are modified by the different temperaments of the offenders. Now as the thermometer of his own sexual passions seems pretty generally to have stood at fever heat, it may be inferred that he deemed his own commissions in this particular venial indeed. With the exception of an incidental account of the arrival of the Prince of Wales (Charles I.) at Paris, on his way to Madrid, upon that romantic and imprudent visit he made there by the instigation of Buckingham, this book never deviates into anything not strictly personal to the author. If his vain-glory and conceit render the accounts of his valorous achievements somewhat suspicious, in one view, they rather authenticate them in another, as exhibiting a character that deemed its own practices the sanctification of any act whatsoever. There is a quaint primitiveness in the style and a seeming unconsciousness that truth should be suppressed, that give a considerable zest to this remarkable memoir.

The passage I extract is that to which I have already alluded, upon the attachment of Lady Ayres for the autobiographer.

“There was a lady also, wife to Sir John Ayres, Knight, who finding some means to get a copy of my picture from Larkin, gave it to Mr. Isaac, * the painter in Blackfriars, and desired him to draw it in little after his manner; which being done, she caused it to be set in gold and enamelled, and so wore it about her neck so low that she hid it under her breast, which I conceive coming after to the knowledge of Sir John Ayres, gave him more cause of jealousy than needed, had he known how innocent I was from pretending to anything which might wrong him or his lady; since I could not so much as imagine that either she had my picture or that she bore more than ordinary affection to me. It is true, that as she had a place at court, and attended Queen Anne, and was beside of an

* Isaac Oliver.

have wanted encouragement for the publication of the third part of his work, which he promises at the termination of the second. As every writer may be supposed to agree with Moore's almanack-compiler in the sentiment "*Je tiens infiniment à ce qu'on me lise*," the fruition of this wish being the achievement of both honour and emolument, it is to be presumed that Sir Nathaniel's subsequent silence was rather the effect of public coldness, than of either the personal resentment or critical vituperation to which he has been subjected. The promised continuation was to have extended from the dissolution of parliament in 1784 to the termination of the King's illness in 1788. Estimating its execution by that of the published volumes, I think we could have better spared a better book. After all the invective and ridicule which have been poured upon poor Sir Nathaniel's head, I apprehend it would be difficult to name a writer who supplies a richer and more varied fund of that light species of anecdote, personal, historical and political, that finds its way agreeably into the social circle.

I do not append any extract, having already made an extensive one of the comparison between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox as orators.

TRAVELS IN JAMAICA.

Feb. 12, 1830.

AMONG the many ill-written books now rife, the worst as a class, seem to me to be colonial travels, and one of the worst of these that have come under my view is Mr. Cynric Williams's present addition to the supply. For the general depravation of this department, it is likely that there are causes to be found both in the authors and their materials. The visitors of the British colonies are principally persons who have been brought up to commerce, and received only the limited education which the pursuits of traffic admit of. The colonial settlements again do not afford topics for the poetic, the antiquarian or the historic traveller. Aggrieved with a noxious climate, they invite no residents but those whose thirst of gain supercedes every other desire and induces them to submit to a temporary

sojourn in an uninviting abode, until their avidity is either sated or finally disappointed. Hence the traces of an established country; high cultivation, ornamental buildings, public works, institutions of a national utility and local character, are all wanting, and no topics are left open to the traveller except the external aspect of the country; its animal and vegetable productions, and the never ending question of negro slavery. This last fertile theme seems to have been the incitement to Mr. Cynric Williams's pen. He is an anti-abolitionist, but his reasons are puerile and unsatisfactory indeed, rather resting upon the popular sneers of the planters, than supported by anything like sound or philosophical argument. He affirms that the slaves themselves are adverse to their manumission in Jamaica, because they apprehend that they should be then unable to provide for their own necessities. This, if true, affords a direful picture of the state of intellectual degradation in which these creatures are plunged. The fortunes of the planters are created exclusively by slave labour, after deducting from their profits the maintenance of the labourers, and yet these latter fear they would be inadequate to their own support! The principle of the co-operative societies in England would not seem too complicated for the comprehension of these degraded beings, and its adoption among them would probably afford the best means of obviating the evils of sudden enfranchisement, and for teaching and enforcing habits of order, economy, industry and social regulation.

I did not intend to read so many pages of this book as I have devoted to its critic, for its inanity was patent in the first six paragraphs, but I imperceptibly waded on to the end, and the present brief notice is the result.

RANDOM RECORDS.

Feb. 13, 1830.

THIS is the alliterative title of an incipient autobiography of George Colman *the Younger*—a junior of sixty eight—the Piccadilly Pliny, as he somewhat complainingly relates his having been termed. We have been so gorged with the self-vouched histories

of dramatists for some time past, that unless the novelties in this department present something of uncommon attraction, they rather pall upon the appetite. Without being exactly equal to the revival of this sated relish, I think the "Random Records" the best thing in their line that has yet appeared; surpassing the similar productions of O'Keefe and Reynolds in perhaps an equal proportion to the superior excellence of the author as a dramatist, to either of these writers. The style is light and sparkling, the anecdotes are new, pointed and appropriate—*se non son veri, son ben trovati*; the portraits are vivid and highly coloured, perhaps rather too much of caricature; and the graver reflective passages executed with an ability displaying the ease and variety of a practised pen. By a very miscellaneous aggregation of matter; by blending memoir, anecdote, description, sentiment, loyal effusions and self quotation altogether, the chronology of these two volumes paces so leisurely and desultorily, that at the end of the second, we are only arrived at the twenty seventh of the author's sixty eight years. Applying then a very simple form of the golden rule, it is easy to estimate the length to which the "Random Records" will extend, should this specimen, put out avowedly by way of feeler, meet the approbation of the public.

Of the demerits of this publication the most signal are the tedious and fulsome adulation of the King and the Duke of York. The praises of one for being a fine gentleman, and of the other for being a good commander-in-chief;—the only topics upon which sycophancy itself could fasten without the suspicion of irony, are dilated upon with a hacknied elaboration of eulogy, extremely disgusting. The countervailing recommendation of the "Random Records" is to be found in the hearty, green senility that is throughout apparent. The following reasoning appeared to me deserving of preservation both for sentiment and diction.

"It sometimes happens, when a cynic has uttered a sarcasm, that drivellers echo it, till it almost passes for a proverb;—thus, the sophistry has obtained that "our school-days are our happiest,"—a remark as ungrateful to the Giver of all good as it is untrue:—for, under an affectation of moralising, it has become the side-wind complaint of every discontented old fool, for all the bitters of life, and his avowal of thanklessness for the sweets. It erases from his reckoning all the bounties which Providence has extended to rational

man ;—such as the exhaustless treasures of nature, for his support and solace ; — the respect, honours and rewards, attainable by merit ;—the ties of kindred, the endearments of love, the glow of friendship, the pleasure of social intercourse, the interchange of kindly acts, the generous heart's universal philanthropy ; — all, all the various soft and silken ligaments which bind us to the civilized world, and attach us to it as much for the sake of others as for ourselves ; — all these it strikes from the account ; and in lieu of them, implies that the clouded morning of the mind is the broadest sunshine of our existence ; that the blessings of life recede in proportion as expanding reason (a blessing in itself) enables us to estimate their value ; and that, consequently, the closer we approximate to beasts ; the nearer we approach to human felicity ! *C. IV. P. 91, 92.*

LOCKHART'S LIFE OF BURNS.

Feb. 14, 1830.

ROBERT BURNS was perhaps of all his species, one of the most interesting subjects that could be presented to a psychologist. Born in a condition of lowliness and poverty ; almost unaided by the advantages of a literary education ; struggling throughout the entire of his brief span of life against pecuniary embarrassments ; his heart sickened by long deferred hopes, and his faculties often paralysed by constitutional spleen ; his mighty genius nevertheless broke through these and every other opposing barrier, and rapidly placed him at the very summit of Scottish intellect. To me his poetical eminence does not supply the strongest evidence of the magnitude of his mental powers. The harmony of versification may be soon acquired by a correct and practised ear ; and the heart that can exquisitely feel the force of nature's beauties will not long need suitable language to describe them. But it is as a prose writer ; as a solid and profound thinker ; as a searching moralist, as a master of that discursive art which we commonly suppose confined to the highly educated scholar, and leisurely speculatist, that Burns exhibits the deepest traces of that exalted though morbid genius, which all who understand him, and many who do not, agree in assigning to him.

Had Burns been a happier man, he might probably have been a less splendid poet, as he certainly would have been a less eloquent moralist. The shafts of misfortune rankling in his breast, like the self-inflicted wounds poetically ascribed to the nightingale, seem to have had their full share in deepening the pathos and solemnity of his more serious effusions.

Mr. Lockhart's memoir is professedly but a compendium of Dr. Currie's, and is excused by the assertion that the latter was not conveniently separable from the poet's works, to which it was introductory. The present composition is creditable both to its author and to the poet it commemorates. Without concealing the errors which marked Burns's career, Mr. Lockhart fairly and ingeniously palliates them, and besides calls up such a countervailing array of excellent and noble qualities, that he must be a cynical reader indeed, who does not pardon the frailty in consideration of its proximate virtue, and partake as well in the author's affection for the personal character, as in his admiration of the poetical accomplishments of his subject.

Burns lived upon the very confines of the two ages when poets were neglected and adulated, and shared amply in each vicissitude. After passing a whole season at Edinburgh, caressed and courted by all that could confer celebrity, he was suffered to subside into the humble station of a small farmer, and when unsuccessful in this pursuit, finally placed in the still more uncongenial one of a supervisor of excise.

Although always necessitous, it does not appear that Burns was habitually either intemperate or indolent. His extraordinary conversational gifts gave him an acceptance in every social circle, which naturally generated in him a reciprocal love of company; but his convivial excesses do not appear often to have transgressed the limits (pretty extensive ones perhaps,) of social license; "and he died," says Lockhart, "without owing any man a shilling."—A pretty convincing proof, when his great generosity to his family is taken into the account, that the poet could not have been an idle, improvident spendthrift.

The subjoined extract is of rather too great a length, for the space usually allotted for quotation, but its matchless eloquence and originality will not admit of curtailment, and will justify its full insertion.

“Canst thou minister,” says the poet, “to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul lost on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame tremblingly alive as to the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldst thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me?”

“For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these ***** times—losses which though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

“Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.—Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which however the sceptic may deny, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to those awful obscure realities—an all-powerful and equally beneficent God—and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve to combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field;—the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

“I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know

anything of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others, were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring, himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift, delighted degrees, is rapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson,

‘These as they change, Almighty Father! these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee;’

And so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn.— These are no ideal pleasures; they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say, equal to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God. ”

P. 262-3-4.

DON QUIXOTE.

Feb. 27, 1830.

ALL the Spaniards of the last two centuries would, I believe, concur in sentencing to the *San benito*, any heretical foreigner who should deny the supremacy of Don Quixote over all other prose fic-

tions. Nor will they even admit our competence to discuss the question, but gag us at once with our ignorance of the national character and idiomatic expressions. In thus excluding all but Spaniards from pronouncing a judgment upon Cervantes, I think they surrender the most valuable part of his fame, because to say that a work is untranslatable, is to claim for it only the merit of a just picture of local and conventional customs, without assigning it the cosmopolitan praise of being one of those transcripts of general nature which find praise in every tongue and a response in every bosom. The personation of Don Quixote himself, though amusing and consistent, does not in my opinion evince any great penetration into the depths of the human mind. He is simply a madman according to the metaphysical definition. He reasons aright from wrong principles, and I do not see why any writer, keeping that attribute steadily in view and having humour and invention enough to apply it to a competent diversity of ludicrous incidents, might not produce as entertaining a personage as the Manchegan Knight. The character of Sancho is perhaps more skilfully compounded. His simplicity and shrewdness are so artfully blended as to hinder our despising him as a fool, or disliking him as a knave. The episodes, those literary dilatations, are well-written, ingeniously-contrived stories, generally of a melancholy cast; perhaps to heighten by contrast the burlesque of the main adventures, which have indeed a sameness much needing occasional relief.

As, for the reason above given, I should be quoting Smollet rather than Cervantes, I refrain from making any extract.

BROWN'S NORTHERN COURTS.

March 6, 1830.

THE courts of Denmark and Sweden are the only ones noticed under this title. The narrative comprises the transactions of the former during the actual reign of Christian VII., and of the latter for the successive reigns of Gustavus III. and IV. If Mr. Brown's be a competent and unbiassed testimony, the licentiousness and depravity of these two courts for the concluding half of the past cen-

ture, not only outdid all that the contemporary states of Europe could exhibit in this particular, but almost vied with ancient Rome in the times of the Cæsars. The father of Christian VII (Frederick V. I believe) married for his second wife, the princess Juliana Maria of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel. From the birth of her own child Frederick, this princess never appears to have remitted her machinations against the unfortunate Crown Prince. In his infancy, an attempt of hers to destroy him by poison was only foiled by the suspicious vigilance of his Norwegian nurse, and her subsequent plans to defeat his prospect of issue were equally baffled, although the means adopted for that end, through the total corruption of his morals, were entirely successful. It was this prince who shortly after his accession in 1766, married Caroline Matilda, sister of George III., so fatally celebrated in connexion with Struensee. I believe the Queen's guilt is doubted by many historians : Mr. Brown however, who is generally the champion of the defamatory cause, at once affirms it, and palliates the criminality, by imputing coldness and impotence to the King, arising, he says, from the habits of indulgence both solitary and sexual, in which he had been initiated by means of his stepmother. Either from these practices, or as others suppose, from the effects of poison, Christian VII. became so utterly imbecile, that on the maturity of his son he was of necessity superseded, and the Crown Prince invested with the royal authority. The portion of Mr. Brown's work devoted to Danish history terminates at this period.

The Swedish memoir commences at the close of the reign of Adolphus Frederick in 1772, and with an account of the successful enterprises of the nobles, who, in despite of the Queen Louisa Ulrica, sister to Frederick the Great, and the Prince Royal, had wrung from the weakness and pusillanimity of Adolphus Frederick, such important concessions as converted the kingdom into an oligarchy. However, Gustavus III. on his accession adopted a course of conduct at once so artful and so vigorous, that without the effusion of a drop of blood, he not only retrieved the whole of the sovereign power, but succeeded in reducing the nobles to a state of the lowest humiliation. The real character of this monarch is not easily recognisable from Mr. Brown's inconsistent portraiture; and although perhaps, inconsistency is not of itself a stamp of falsehood in the delineation of the human mind, yet in this instance I think the testimo-

ny of Mr. Brown rather more than suspicious. He was himself an active agent of the self-called constitutional party, and even made a voyage to England to solicit the assistance of the British ministry in the dethronement of Gustavus Adolphus IV. To a nation like England, warring to extermination on behalf of legitimacy, it was obviously a preliminary of the greatest moment, to make manifest that in aiding such an enterprise, she would not be violating her own principles. One of the main arguments used therefore for setting aside the King of Sweden was, that he was a supposititious child :—the son of the Queen by a Major Muncke, to whom her own husband had prostituted her in order to establish his government by the semblance of offspring which he was himself incapable of begetting. To endue this tale with the least credibility, it was plainly indispensable to blacken, to the deepest dye, the character of the man who could be supposed capable of such a detestable outrage, and accordingly Mr. Brown lays on his *succus loliginis* with unsparing hand. By his account, Gustavus III., besides being addicted to a nameless crime, was despotic, cruel and deceitful. Yet how is this character reconcilable with the various noble and eminent qualities assigned him by this same authority—his taste and encouragement of the fine arts; his great endowments, his splendid eloquence, and universal accomplishments; his bravery and addiction to war; and his sublime and magnanimous intercession for the lives of his assassins, both before and after he knew that his wound from Ankarstrom's pistol was mortal?

As to Gustavus IV. (Adolphus) who succeeded to the crown on the assassination of his predecessor in 1796; whether he swayed the sceptre as the legitimate monarch or only as a spurious pretender, his wild projects, his insatiable thirst for war, his contumacious and frantic opposition to Bonaparte even when his neck was under the victor's foot, all richly earned for him the deposition he suffered in 1809. The Duke of Sudermanland the brother of Gustavus III., who had been regent in the minority of Gustavus IV., succeeded to the crown by the name of Charles XIII, but reigned only nominally by the permission of Bernadotte his successor.

One word as to the authorship of these volumes. Mr. Brown is a professed admirer of the writing of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, and proves his sincerity by becoming his copyist. Like his model, he anxiously catches at and elaborately establishes every rumour of scandal suit-

able to his narrative, and the rambling redundant structure of his periods gives to the style the same resemblance which pervades the sentiment. Mr. Brown is however, both in matter and manner, a less diversified and entertaining anecdotist than Wraxall.

The necessity for a prompt restitution of library books has prevented my keeping this one sufficiently long to search for a passage adapted to extraction. However neither the thoughts nor diction afford any peculiarity such as would render exemplification desirable.

BAVIAD AND MØEVIAD.

March 14, 1830.

SOME forty years ago, an association of versifiers formed themselves into a kind of joint stock company for the seeming purpose of puffing off the poetical lucubrations of one another, and advancing their common progress to fame upon the general fund of panegyric so created. Mr. Merry, Mr. Greathead, Mrs. Cowley and Mrs. Robinson were the principal partners in this literary firm, and "Della Crusca," the signature of the first-named poetaster, was applied as the designation of the concern. The features of the Della Cruscan offspring were affectation, tinsel and hyperbole; but I believe it was altogether untainted with irreligion, grossness or impurity. Being quite inoffensive, excepting to good taste, the "Della Cruscans," one would think, might have been allowed peaceably "to strut and fret their hour upon the stage, and then be heard no more;" or if the corruption of the public taste demanded the acceleration of their course down the stream of oblivion, they might have been sufficiently propelled by the lighter breezes of good-humoured raillery or playful ridicule, without having let loose upon them "the very torrent, the tempest and whirlwind" of angry invective. Mr. Gifford, it seems, deemed the transgressions of this confederacy of either too deep a dye, or too diffusive a tendency for such lenient treatment. He employs the scourge where the fly-flap might have sufficed; lashes himself into a furious rage, and in two satires imitated from the first of Persius and tenth of Horace, with an *under-current* of notes and illustrations, unlocks a magazine

wherein is repositied every weapon for intellectual warfare that an artist plying his task with preeminent skill and exceeding earnestness could forge. To the two satires are appended the trial of Faulder the printer for an alleged libel upon John Williams, (Antony Pasquin,) contained in the Baviad, and a poetical epistle to Peter Pindar in which the author surpasses himself in the bitterness and scurrility of his vituperation.

Although Mr. Gifford arrogates to himself the praise of extinguishing the Della Cruscans, I think the event rather establishes *their* feebleness, than *his* prowess. There is a reactionary sentiment created in the public mind in favour of those who are made the objects of merciless and disproportioned chastisement, that often goes the length of, at least temporarily, even advancing their reputation, and which should make every assailant cautious of venting his wrath beyond the limit within which he may reckon upon popular concurrence. This, I take to be the meaning of Cowper's remark that "the application of too much strength is often as fatal as too little." But whether or not Mr. Gifford's mode be the most effectual for crushing his victim, it indubitably is *not* the best for upholding the dignity of the literary tribunal. He who sets himself in the judgment seat from whose award infamy or renown is to follow, ought to preserve a calmness and moderation calculated to remove all suspicion of "the court" being an interested party in the cause at issue.

Besides the reprehensible spirit in which the "Baviad and Mæviad" is conceived, it is also censurable for the constant interruptions to the text produced by its multitudinous notes. The reader's attention is first distracted by references to the Latin parallels: another array of asterisks and obelisks transfer him thence to a note—that note is ultimately expounded by another, so that the work resembles one of those Indian puzzles of sphere revolving within sphere, the construction of which has set so many a beholder at his wit's end.

I verify the foregoing strictures by a few specimens of that condensed spirit of gall and bitterness which is poured on the head of Doctor Wolcot.

"False fugitive! back to thy vomit flee—
Troll the lascivious song, the fulsome glee;

Truck praise for lust, hunt infant genius down,
Strip modest merit of its last half-crown;
Blow from thy mildew'd lips, on virtue blow,
And blight the goodness thou canst never know.

* * * * *

BUT WHAT IS HE, that with a Mohawk's air,
' Cries havoc and lets slip the dogs of war ? '
A bloated mass, a gross, blood-bolter'd clod,
A foe to man, a renegade from God,
From noxious childhood to pernicious age,
Separate to infamy in every stage.

CORNWALL remembers yet his first employ,
And shuddering tells with what infernal joy,
His little tongue in blasphemies was loos'd,
His little hands in deeds of horror us'd,
While mangled insects strew'd his cradle o'er,
And stain'd his bib with———gore. "

FRANKLAND'S TRAVELS TO AND FROM CONSTANTINOPLE.

March 19, 1830.

THESE travels comprise a land journey from Vienna to Constantinople ; a voyage by the Dardanelles to the Troad and some of the Greek ports, as Athens and Missolonghi ; a considerable sojourn in Syria, and a return to Vienna by Italy and the Tyrol.

Captain Frankland disclaims all pretensions to the character of either a literary or scientific traveller. He relates what he saw and felt, fresh from the impression of the objects themselves, and without much apparent concern about the manner in which he imparts his information. This gives a naturalness and animation to his style, which perhaps would be disadvantageously exchanged for more elaboration, and which has the further advantage of giving credence to his assertion, so generally suspicious in the bulk of authors, that his book was not originally intended for

publication. Captain Frankland has discovered another valuable secret to his new profession of authorship, in recommending himself so heartily to the good will of his readers, that we feel an interest in whatever befalls him independent of any thing intrinsically strange or engaging in the incidents themselves. This kindly feeling is generated not by any studied contrivance to win our favour, but from the unaffected emanations of good nature and good humour which are constantly visible. His affection for his dog Ponto, and the admirable account given of the excellent qualities of that faithful companion, evince the amiable and clear-sighted observer of the inferior works of nature, and this part of the work will never appear tedious to those who are blessed with a kindred perception and softness of heart. Having cheerfully given this meed of praise to Captain Frankland, I cannot close this article without adding that I do not consider these volumes as calculated to make either a very deep or very lasting impression upon the general reader. Although all the remarkable objects that came within the writer's observation are noticed, yet it is rather in vague and general description than with that art which conveys a distinct picture to the mind. Nevertheless for his qualities as a man rather than as a writer, we take leave of him at the termination of his book with the feeling with which we bid farewell to a travelling companion whose gentlemanly deportment and agreeable society has made our time pass pleasantly at least, if not very profitably.

I transcribe some of the author's detached admonitions to the Eastern Traveller which are appended to his description of Syria.

“Of one thing I am firmly convinced, that the less baggage the traveller has, and the smaller his cortége, the better, for he then is unembarrassed in his movements, and does not become an object of cupidity to the ill-disposed, or to the predatory tribes. He should likewise, as much as possible, show a perfect confidence in the people, among whom his fortune has thrown him, and carefully avoid giving them any offence by word or deed. Let him always be firm in resisting attempts upon his purse, or upon his property of every sort; and, above all things, let him never be prevailed upon to pay beforehand for any article whatever.

* * * * *

” The Englishman will find the Turks generally well disposed

towards his nation ; for, in despite of the present ambiguous nature of our proceedings towards them , they cannot forget past services rendered in the time of their necessity. He had better always make his attendants announce him as ‘ El Inglis,’ in preference to ‘ El Frangi,’ which is the general appellation of the European nations, with none of whom, excepting the *Muscovites*, are they so well acquainted as with ourselves. ”

Vol. 2. P. 179—181.

WRAXALL'S NORTHERN COURTS.

March 23, 1830.

INSTEAD of again attempting the often repeated task of criticising Wraxall and devoting more pages to what would be after all only verbally different from what the present and the other works of the same author have before elicited in these reviews, it will be turning this reperusal of “ the Northern Courts ” to the most convenient account to abstract the principal events of the “ Seven years War,” an era so interesting in modern history, and supplying the most curious and entertaining body of information comprised in these volumes.

In the year 1741, during the height of the Empress Queen's distresses and embarrassments, Frederick the Great ungenerously took advantage of the opportunity to invade Silesia, and secured its possession by the battle of Molwitz, gained over Marshal Neuperg. After some years of tranquillity, the court of Vienna appears to have become anxious both to regain its lost province and to humble its aggressive neighbour : for these purposes a coalition, consisting of Austria, France, Russia, Sweden and the Empire, was formed in the year 1756. Frederick, however, anticipating his adversaries, burst in upon Saxony in the summer of that year and made himself master of Dresden. Marching thence towards Bohemia to meet the Austrians in their advance to the relief of the Saxons, the two armies encountered at Lowositz in the direct road from Dresden to Prague. The Austrians under Count Brown were compelled to retreat without having been decisively worsted, but the consequence was the surrender of the entire Saxon army to Frederick. The

author terms the campaign of 1757, the most fertile in battles, reverses and great events of any recorded in modern history—He means of course up to that time; for the campaigns of republican and imperial France make all antecedent ones what the *Batrachomyomachia* was to the *Iliad*. This memorable campaign commenced with the irruption of Frederick into Bohemia, followed by the battle and siege of Prague. The Austrians were commanded in the field by Count Brown and Prince Charles of Lorraine, and were routed, chiefly by the intrepidity of Marshal Schwerin, who fell in the action. Frederick now appears to have committed an error in neither pursuing the fugitives nor pressing the siege with sufficient vigour, but dividing his army, he left one portion to prosecute the leaguer and marched forward himself with the remainder. With this fragment of his troops he attacked the rallied Austrians at Colin and sustained a signal defeat which compelled him to raise the siege of Prague and retire towards Saxony followed by the victorious Daun. The imperialists now entered Silesia and reduced Schweidnitz, an important fortress in that province, and the situation of the King became critical, if not desperate. The result of two battles however soon enabled him to retrieve his affairs and resume the offensive. The first of these was fought at Rosbach near the river Saal in Thuringia, and the second at Lissa in Silesia. At Rosbach he was opposed to the combined Austrians and French under the Princes of Saxe-Hilberghausen and Soubise; at Lissa he contended with the Austrians under Prince Charles of Lorraine, and the effect of this victory was the re-conquest of Silesia. The campaign of 1758 opened with the recapture of Schweidnitz and the investure of Olmutz, the capital of Moravia, by Frederick. He was soon, however, obliged to relinquinsh his enterprise by Laudohn's seizure of an important convoy of provisions. The Russians having meanwhile entered the electorate of Brandenburg, the King gave them battle at Zorndorf, near Custrin, slaughtering 21,000 of them and compelling the retreat of the rest. Frederick's next exploit was the extrication of his brother Prince Henry, who had been surrounded by Daun in the vicinity of Dresden. Not satisfied with effecting this object, he attempted to cut off the Austrian communications with Bohemia, and for that purpose took post at the village of Hochkirchen in Lusatia. Here he was surprised and signally defeated by Daun. Notwithstanding this disaster the king appears to have kept his enemies from making

any acquisition for the remainder of the campaign. At the commencement of 1739, Frederick, diverting his attention from the Austrians to the Russians, attacked Soltikoff reinforced by Laudohn, at Cunersdorff on the Oder, and suffered almost the total destruction of his army. The supineness of Soltikoff gave the king time to breathe, and he rose almost more formidable from his humiliation; but previous to his regaining the ascendant, Daun wrested Dresden from his hands, and the Prussian General Finck surrendered to the same general with 20,000 men at Maxen, and with this last reverse terminated the campaign of 1739. The events of the year 1760 were led by the defeat and capture of the Prussian General Fouquet who surrendered prisoner to Laudohn. The possession of Glatz in Silesia thereby fell to the victor, and that province became again the chief theatre of hostilities. The King once more delivered himself from an almost hopeless situation by defeating Laudohn at Lignitz, but from the disparity of his forces to those of his enemies, his fortunes still remained in peril until he followed up the blow by the battle and victory of Torgau on the Elbe. This engagement commenced so inauspiciously to the Prussians, that Daun had already despatched couriers to Vienna with tidings of victory, when the accidental discovery of one of his unguarded heights changed the fate of the day. The result of this battle was the re-expulsion of the Austrians from Silesia, and the re-establishment of the Prussian winter quarters in Saxony. The campaign of 1761 was sterile in great events. Laudohn however again made himself master of Schweidnitz, and Frederick's fortunes seemed altogether desperate, when in January 1762, the Empress Elizabeth of Russia expired, and the withdrawal of that power from the confederacy immediately ensued. Sweden also made a separate peace, and the King, thus relieved from two of his opponents, laid siege once more to Schweidnitz, which he recaptured. With the battle of Freyberg, gained by Prince Henry over the united Austrians and imperialists, terminated the seventh and last campaign of this sanguinary war. The peace of Hubertsberg, concluded in the beginning of 1763, restored tranquillity to the north of Europe.

The events of this memorable war prove the inestimable advantage which an army under one leader with a unity of purpose and absolute power, possesses over the greatest numerical superiority, when actuated by powers of different or conflicting interests and

liable both to unimproved successes, and absolute reverses from the misintelligence or rivalry of its respective generals.*

It may be observed *obiter* that I have mistitled this book — it should be styled “Memoirs of the Courts of Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw and Vienna.”

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF LOUIS XVIII.

April 1, 1830.

THESE memoirs are written in the person of Madame Du Cayla, although her name is suppressed. It is, it seems, doubtful whether the composition is actually hers, but as the memoirs are considered authentic, she must have at least supplied all the materials, and is therefore fully responsible for the publication.

I have already had occasion to remark, and with that mixture of derision and impatience which the topic provokes, upon the spawn of petticoated-politicians and constitution-mongers generated by the French revolution, and which every subsequent political excitement in that country has served to animate into the active vitality of broaching theories and constructing systems, until the press teems with the pert flippancies and fallacious crudities of those busy, shallow and self-sufficient pretenders. There is, I suppose, no country in Europe where education has made the same advances it has done in France, where the women are so totally disqualified for all those tasks requiring concentration and steadiness of mental energy, and more especially for what relates to the science of government, a subject little understood even by their most enlightened statesmen. In England, where the subject *is* understood, practically at least, a woman of sense and reflection after receiving that extended and liberalised education now bestowed on females, might perhaps, in the meditation which the domestic habits of the sex with us admit of, succeed in the composition of a treatise on codification evincing sufficient novelty and cleverness to dispute the palm with Bentham

* Bonaparte said that for the successful conduct of a campaign, one indifferent general was better than two excellent ones.

himself. But for a Frenchwoman, thoughtless, showy and frivolous both by education and habit—making brilliancy and stage effect “her being’s end and aim,” for her to sit down seriously to illustrate a science still very little advanced, one which requires a greater number of conflicting elements to be adjusted and reconciled, than any that can be named, and which more than any other involves the interest of mankind over the habitable globe; this is indeed a stretch of presumption to which that of the frog in the fable was small and venial. Yet this glib demi-rep. utters her canons concerning men and measures with as much pert confidence and dogmatism as if her positions were all infallible and incontrovertible. It either speaks well for literary freedom in France, or very ill for the respect paid there to their defunct sovereigns, that such a publication as this should have been at all permitted to issue from the press; for nothing can be more calculated to exhibit the character of Louis XVIII. and his government in a ludicrous and contemptible light. In reading these pages one is less surprised that Bonaparte, almost alone and unaided, should at once have upturned this feeble and frivolous monarchy, than that its inherent corruption and debility did not accomplish its dissolution without the application of any external violence. Louis himself appears to have been a compound of indecision, insincerity and selfishness, precisely the opposite to every thing which was requisite to establish him on his throne and fit him for his times. Instead of trusting this very equivocal lady merely with those things which

“Rimosa bene deponuntur in auro.”

he appears to have constituted her the very mainspring of the whole machine of his government. When the bridge of Jena is about to be blown up, *she* is sent to deprecate the Emperor Alexander: when the unhappy old man, after all his boastful flourishing, fled to Ghent at the first accredited notice of danger, and commenced his tamperings with Fouché, *she* is the sole intervenient. Then we find her intriguing, (politically) with Talleyrand; fencing with Savary; duping Fouché, circumventing Blacas, promoting Chateaubriand; in short busy in making or marring every body’s fortunes, and at the same time accredited by Louis as a secret and domestic plenipotentiary. A curiosity is naturally felt as to whether this

pragmatical personage obtained her power over the silly and despicable dotard by any sacrifice of chastity : I think it will appear from a passage I transcribe, as an evidence at once of the writer's virtue, sentiment, and that *frankness* of which she makes a boast, that if her person was not prostituted, it was from want of ability to gather the fruit which was perfectly ready to fall. At least I cannot otherwise interpret the very remarkable sentence with which the paragraph I extract concludes. The memoirs present a curious and revolting picture of the utter destitution of principle, gratitude, or personal attachment which seems to have pervaded almost every member of both Louis's and Napoleon's court and ministry. Of this, the respective reigning families seem to have set an illustrious example. "When"—"exclaims the writer, echoing of course the sentiments of the Bourbons,—“when was sincerity found in the English councils?”—and this fresh upon the restoration of the family by means of British blood and treasure, after an eleemosynary asylum during the years of their most hopeless degradation, in the British territories! The whole of these memoirs is not however equally liable to animadversion : they contain some facts very curious if true : that of Ney's conduct previous to his setting out against Bonaparte, and the secret treaty between Austria and the latter, are among the number ; but nothing can expiate the sins of presumptuous insolence with which the book is impeachable.

The first extract I make is the critique upon Lords Castlereagh and Wellington :

“At this period I saw Lord Castlereagh for the first time. A combination of singularly fortunate circumstances had procured for him the reputation of a man of high talent. However, it would be unjust to deny his claim to a considerable degree of shrewdness and ability, and I readily admit that next to MM. Talleyrand, Metternich and some others, Lord Castlereagh was the first diplomatist in Europe. While we in France employed sentiment in the management of our political affairs, Lord Castlereagh in England employed money, which is a much surer instrument. He possessed solid sense and ready intelligence, without any good quality of heart or loftiness of mind. The manner of his death is generally known.

“The first day I saw him I conceived a mortal dislike to him as well as to his countryman the Duke of Wellington. But all the

ladies of the French court were not equally hard to please, and the hero of Toulouse found many susceptible hearts. On this subject I may relate a little anecdote." *V. 2. P. 10.*

She then proceeds to describe how a countess fell in love with what she calls "the half eagle-like, half sheepish countenance" of the Duke : that an interview was the result, in which the innamorata's disappointment was so great—from what cause is not expressed,—that she ever after spoke of him with anger and aversion.

I shall conclude this already long article with the paragraph I have before alluded to.

"Grief renders the heart susceptible of the tenderest affections : men never think women so interesting as when they are in tears. This is perhaps because they know that in our weakness we love to be consoled. How few young widows remain faithful to their sorrow ! For my own part I must confess, that when I returned to court after the death of my husband, my grief seemed destined to be eternal. Yet it yielded to a return of that *besoin d'aimer* which had well nigh ruined me in my giddy youth,—which had displeased a husband, from whom politics separated me, and which disposed of my existence after the second restoration. But before I enter upon this episode of my memoirs, I must relate a singular scene which the flattering intimacy I was honoured with by the king enabled me to witness.

"Melancholy is certainly contagious. I observed that Louis XVIII., after occasionally reproving me for my dulness, seemed himself to be drawn into a sort of sympathetic thoughtfulness. He, who had always esteemed a sprightly remark worth a hundred sentimental reflections, became all at once as decidedly seized with mysticism as the Emperor Alexander himself; and my kind friends, the courtiers, did not fail to compare me to Madame Krudener. No doubt the indulgence of these feelings occasionally betrayed his majesty into expressions of kind familiarity, which offered scope for malicious interpretation. Indeed indiscreet and exaggerated rumours gave me credit for greater influence than I really possessed. And why may I not acknowledge that there were times in which I myself indulged a moment's transient illusion? I speak frankly, and confess my most inward thoughts; but at the same time I beg to be allowed once for all to adopt the motto of the garter, *Honni soit qui mal y pense.*

“Like all people advanced in life, the king loved to recall in imagination the scenes and feelings of his youth, and he used to talk over the conquests of the Count de Provence. He described the past in such lively colours that he made it almost present to his hearers : —yet, king as he was, he was obliged to content himself with the pleasures of recollection.”

V. 2. P. 330-1.

HEBER'S JOURNEY FROM CALCUTTA TO BOMBAY.

April 28, 1830.

THE merits of this narrative, and they are many and important, are all its own : its defects are attributable, perhaps wholly, to that fatality which prevented the amiable author from the task of revision and remodelling, and deprived British India of a zealous and most efficient pastor. I consider it rather fortunate that my information respecting India was unsupplied until the abundant sources opened by the learning, industry and talent of such a writer as the late Bishop of Calcutta, served at once to excite and allay my curiosity. Besides the stamp of genuineness which his testimony takes from the fairness and impartiality of his own mind, it is put farther beyond suspicion by the station he occupied divesting him of any personal interest in the majority of the questions which it would be most desirable to settle respecting East-India affairs. The important point of how far the extension of British conquests has been beneficial or hurtful to the interests of the Indian continent, is one of those on which Dr. Heber's peculiar position enables him to give persuasive testimony, and of a kind that must outweigh a host of representations by the Company's officials on one side, and whatever a degraded nawáb or impoverished zemindar could allege on the other. I therefore assume that Dr. Heber's statements are to be received without greater deductions than must be allowed to those prepossessions and prejudices, from which neither the wisest nor the best are totally exempt. After devoting a chapter, and

that not without interest, to the particulars of his outer voyage, the author opens his narrative with the description, local and moral, of Calcutta. With respect to the situation of this seat of government, the same remark is made that seems applicable to the British Indian settlements in general: — that it and they are uniformly placed in unwholesome situations. The alleged reason for this is the unwillingness of government unnecessarily to encroach on the property of the natives, who having at first chosen the salubrious spots for themselves, left vacant only the noxious places. But surely, as the Bishop observes in answer, it would have been money well bestowed to have compensated them for their losses, rather than needlessly to consign our colonists and soldiers prematurely to the hospital and the grave. Independent of the agency of the climate upon animal life, its power seems to be baleful to every department of social enjoyment throughout India. The swarms of insects, both of the destructive and the merely troublesome tribes, form one of the large catalogue of its grievous results. The apartments remain unceiled at Calcutta lest the depredations of the white ant should not be timeously visible, and the rooms after being the resort of cock-roaches and birds during the day, become infested with large bats at the appearance of candles. These agreeable visitors are occasionally reinforced by a serpent or a scorpion, but not very frequently. After remaining long enough at Calcutta and its neighbourhood to see and describe all their most interesting objects, the Bishop commenced his exploration of the Northern provinces, by navigating the Burrampooter as far as Cawnpore, and afterwards proceeding by the course of the Ganges, partly along its banks and partly on its stream, to the important towns of Dacca, Oude, Lucknow, Benares, Burtpoor, Jyepoor, and many others of the multitudinous *poors* that terminate the local appellatives of this clime. In his progress N.W. to Bombay, the Bishop ascended one of the minor ridges of the great Himalaya chain and obtained a distant view of Dainty-Davy * or some such name—the highest pinnacle in the world—23,500 feet above the sea! The transcript of his impressions from this sublime scenery is graphical and animated, serving to diversify very agreeably the tenor of a narrative which is protracted rather monotonously: chronicling with impar-

* Nundidevi.

tial minuteness the interminable *poors* with every conceivable prefix: places alike remarkable for the immensity of their population and the decline of their splendour. For this decadence there are two conspiring and most efficient causes: the first is the subversion or depression of the local governments; the other and most active cause is the destructive power of the climate—which does more to demolish the operations of man in one century in India, than the hand of time unaided by such an auxiliary, accomplishes in three, in our latitudes. The fine specimens of Oriental Gothic exhibited in mosques, serais and pagodas, present themselves in every stage of picturesque dilapidation, and become materials for the legend and the tradition at an age when nothing European can prefer a claim to the antique. After visiting the Island of Ceylon, which would seem on the whole a more attractive place of abode than any part of the mainland, Bishop Heber arrived at Tanjore, and was there taken lifeless out of a bath on the 3d of April 1823. He evinced no symptoms of approaching dissolution and appears to have died as he lived—tranquilly and happily—leaving the prosecution of various extensive and important clerical designs to a successor who will find it difficult adequately to fill up the outline he left, while the publication of his journal and correspondence devolved upon his widow, who has performed her task the more effectively from the modesty and diffidence with which it is announced. The state of religion in India naturally engrosses a great portion of the details of this journal. Of all the missionaries that abound there, those of the baptist congregation seem to be most successful in gaining proselytes. Neither the church of Rome nor that of England appears to have reaped very abundant laurels. Indeed if the Armenian priest entertained and described by the Bishop, be a fair average of the catholic church-militant in India, its failure in gaining converts is not surprising. Of the two great sects into which Hindostan is divided, the Mahomeddan and the Hindoo, the former supplies the greatest number of converts to christianity; thus affording a corroborative instance in support of the theory of some recent polemic, that the unity of religion promised at the consummation of the world was in visible progress, and that Mahomeddanism was to be the alembic through which the wilder and more remote sects of infidels were to be depurated. Or probably this speculation took its rise from the facts here detailed.

Upon the whole, the interest and value of this narrative is deducible from the evidences of learning, piety and worth everywhere apparent in its author. Its fault, and it is one *par pluribus*, is its prolixity and want of variety and relief—a fault by which as much description is expended upon trifles as upon objects of importance, and the meanest village is brought into as prominent notice as a town containing a quarter of a million inhabitants.

Be it remembered however that this work was read with unfixed attention, and reviewed more than one month after that negligent perusal.

I extract the commencement of the description of Delhi, the capital of the Mogul dominions.

“*December 29.*—The morning was clear and pleasant, and the air and soil delightfully refreshed by the rain. I rode Cābul, and arrived by about eight o'clock on the banks of the Jumna, on the other side of which I had a noble view of Delhi, which is a larger and finer city than I expected to see. The inhabited part of it, for the ruins extend over a surface as large as London, Westminster, and Southwark, is about seven miles in circuit, seated on a rocky range of hills, and surrounded by an embattled wall, which the English Government have put into repair, and are now engaged in strengthening with bastions, a moat and a regular glacis. The houses within are many of them large and high. There are a great number of mosques with high minarets and gilded domes, and above all are seen the palace, a very high and extensive cluster of Gothic towers and battlements, and the Jumna Musjeid, the largest and handsomest place of Mussulman worship in India. The chief material of all these fine buildings is red granite, of a very agreeable though solemn colour, inlaid in some of the ornamental parts, with white marble, and the general style of building is of a simple and impressive character, which reminded me, in many respects, of Carnarvon. It far excels any thing at Moscow.

“The Jumna, like the other great rivers of this country, overflows, during the rains, a wide extent; but, unlike the Ganges, does not confer fertility. In this part of its course, it is so strongly impregnated with natron, extensive beds of which abound in all the neighbourhood, that its waters destroy, instead of promoting vegetation, and the whole space between the high banks and the river, in its present

low state, is a loose and perfectly barren sand like that of the sea-shore. I found the ferry-boat in readiness, and was received on the other side by Mr. Elliott, who had come to meet me with an elephant and a very numerous suwarree of spears and matchlocks. We went together towards the city, over a similar bed of arid sand with that which I had just passed, forded a smaller branch of the Jumna, which runs close under the walls, and, leaving the palace to our left, went along a tolerably wide street to the Residency, which is a large straggling building, consisting of two or three entertaining rooms added by Sir David Ochterlony, when resident, to an old Mussulman palace. Lushington, whom I found just arrived, had his bed-room in this palace, a very singular and interesting little room, with a vaulted roof, richly ornamented with mosaic painting. Behind is a large garden, laid out in the usual formal Eastern manner, but with some good trees and straight walks, and the whole has more the appearance of a college than anything else."

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MAWE'S TRAVELS IN BRAZIL.

April 29, 1830.

THE opening of this work so fully and yet so succinctly develops its succeeding narrative, that it is more commodiously suited to the purpose of these pages than anything I could substitute of my own in its place, and I therefore transcribe it at large.

"In the year 1804, I was induced to undertake a voyage of commercial experiment, on a limited scale, to the Rio de la Plata. On my arrival at Monte Video, the ship and cargo were seized; I was thrown into prison, and afterwards sent into the interior, where I was detained until the taking of that place by the British troops under Sir Samuel Auchmuty. I afterwards obtained leave to accompany the army under General Whitelocke, which was sent against Buenos Ayres, and I rendered such services to the expedition, as my two years' residence in the country enabled me to perform. At the termination of that expedition, I went to Rio de Janeiro. A letter

of introduction to the Viceroy of Brazil, which was given me by the Portuguese Minister at London, gained me the notice and protection of his brother, the Condé de Linhares, who had then just arrived with the rest of the Court, and who recommended me to the Prince Regent, as a person devoted to mineralogical pursuits, and desirous of exploring the ample field for investigation which his rich and extensive territories presented. His Royal Highness was graciously pleased to further my views, not only by granting me letters to the public functionaries of the various places I wished to visit, but by ordering an escort of soldiers, and every other necessary provision for performing the journey. I had the more reason to be grateful for this munificent patronage, because I knew that a decree existed, prohibiting all foreigners from travelling in the interior of Brazil, and that no other Englishman had ever begun such an undertaking with the indispensable requisites to its success, the permission and sanction of the Government."

Thus accredited and qualified, Mr. Mawe proceeded partly by voyage, and partly by journey, northward from Buenos Ayres to the chief mining districts in and about the latitude of Porto Securo. — The miserably low standard to which the Brazilians have sunk in the arts conducive to the comforts, much less the luxuries of life; their neglect or mismanagement of all the resources of an exuberant soil, in their absorbing eagerness in the pursuit of gold and diamond-washings—the poverty, idleness and filth so universally pertaining to those who apply themselves to precarious acquisitions, render the economy and manners of these people a topic little suited to gain popularity. While on the other hand, the barrenness and unimpressive character of the mining districts, to which the author's attention was mainly directed, deprive them of any of the attributes for scenic description which we are apt to require in the delineation of remote and unfrequented regions. The statistical portion of Mr. Mawe's work makes however ample amends for any deficiencies in its descriptive department. The capabilities of the climate and soil are ably discussed, and the processes of the gold and diamond washing very clearly and satisfactorily detailed. The demand of a reprint of this volume so long after its first publication as 1823, sufficiently attests that its information is accurate and unsuperse-
ded by any more recent authority. The style is that of a man of business, sufficiently imbued with literature to explain himself in

apposite language and perspicuous style, without aiming at any of the higher graces of composition.

The processes of gold and diamond washing appear to be essentially alike. When a slave discovers a diamond of seventeen carats weight, he becomes entitled to his freedom. The Emperor was supposed to possess jewels to the value of three million sterling when Mr. Mawe wrote. He also obtains as a government duty, the fifth of all the gold smelted in Brazil.

DODDINGTON'S DIARY.

May 28, 1830,

THE chronology of this fragment of political autobiography is almost co-incident with that of Lord Waldegrave's more full and entertaining work :—the few years immediately anterior and subsequent to the death of Frederick Prince of Wales. In conformity with the theory which holds that the occasion creates the men suited to it, this epoch, so rife in political speculation, seems to have given life and activity to a junto of knavish schemers, able and willing to advance their private ends by the most consummate and most unflinching dishonesty ; at the head of which Doddington appears to stand, from the double qualification of eminent talent and utter improbity. At the distance of now almost a twelvemonth from a hasty perusal, I am not able to transcribe even the faint and shadowy outline which the author draws of the transactions in which he was concerned, and his own conduct or motives respecting them. According to my recollection, he appears at the opening of the diary, as one of the most zealous worshippers of that rising sun whose meridian was never attained—in other words, the subservient courtier of Frederick Prince of Wales. At this period he was actively employed either in breaking new ground or retrieving lost way in the good graces of his patron, and had to countermine the enmity of the Princess in forcing himself, as he ultimately did, into the establishment of Carlton house. He had enjoyed his success but a very little while, when the death of the Prince melted his own projects and those of his adherents into air, and sent Doddington to tender

his wares at the only remaining market. Here however, from the well-founded aversion of George II. he was likely to be without a purchaser ; and accordingly to overcome the king's repugnance, a series of curious and complicated manœuvring ensues with the Pelhams. The entire traffic was carried on upon the almost recognised principle of mutual deception and outwitting : Doddington's capital in the venture was his parliamentary influence, personal and proprietary ; while the Pelhams, then at the head of the government, were the dispensers from that cornucopia of place and pension, in which Doddington so eagerly craved to participate. A chasm occurs in the manuscript before these negotiations are brought to an issue, but it is to be inferred that they terminated prosperously for Doddington, as on the resumption of the diary we find him treasurer of the navy (I think,) and continuing in place until the termination of the work.

A book written exclusively to supply memoranda to its author will necessarily contain, whatever be its subject, much of what would be obscure, and much of what would be unintelligible to any other person. If, like the present, it was besides almost exclusively conversant upon topics that would not, from their disgraceful character, bear to meet the light, and had only made its way to the press long after its writer and all his contemporaries were dead and nearly forgotten, this obscurity must be exceedingly increased, so that even with the aid of contemporary history many of the events touched upon are unintelligible, and the personal character and motives of the writer, especially so. Of a high family, wealthy, childless and old, that Doddington should have been instigated by an insatiable appetite for place and emolument, to undertake the most laborious and profligate machinations for their achievement, seems like infatuation : not as an expenditure of integrity or honour, on which he appeared to affix no value, but as the sacrifice of time, and ease and personal convenience, for no assignable object but a posthumous one, by a man who appears to have been thoroughly heartless and depraved, and to have lived for himself alone without any concern for fame or posterity. But such are the riddles we have constantly to solve in the analyses of human character !

CLOUDESLEY.

June 4, 1850.

MR. GODWIN has at once selected a story the most trite and meagre, and managed it defectively by needlessly breaking it into a mixture of narrative and action, as a vehicle for some vivid scenic description—some able development of human passions, and a sustained flow of pure, energetic, sonorous diction. The tale is the re-iterated, hacknied nursery legend of a guardian supplanting his infant ward in his wealth and honours; publishing the falsehood of his death, and consigning him to a life of obscurity under the custody of an humble minion, whose offspring he is taught to consider himself. The incidents of “Cloudesley” revolve exclusively upon those three characters, of which that of the wronged heir is rather too ideally faultless and perfect. Indeed Mr. Godwin’s superiority in the delineation of the criminal workings of the human character in preference to its more amiable and virtuous tendencies, is abundantly exemplified in this novel, in which the wrong-doer, who is the relater of the story nearly to its close, and his instrument, who gives it its title, are finely compounded of those mingled qualities which compose the varied field of the human heart, with its tares and cockle growing up rank and strong with the harvest which they mingle with and impair. The rise and workings of the same sentiment, remorse, in the chief delinquent and his lowly accomplice; the superstition so incident to an awakened culprit seeing in every incident of his life, and in every phase of surrounding nature, something awfully directed to himself and suited to his peculiar case; and the final prevalence of conscience and return to virtue, all are pourtrayed with those modifying tinges from the station and circumstances of each individual, which exhibit pictures in the truest keeping and conformity with their prototypes in nature, and evince that refined, artist-like perception which stamps and moulds its own conceptions into existences at once discriminated, permanent and recognisable.

“Cloudesley” has been rated up to the level of “Caleb Wil-

liams," the author's classic novel. In the composition and finish of particular passages it may perhaps merit this praise; but its inferiority to the average of fictitious writing in the construction of its story forbids it to compete with a work whose deepest spring of interest is the occult, inscrutable formation of its plot. In "Caleb Williams," although every transaction arises naturally and easily from the precedent ones, you are unable even to conjecture the catastrophe until it bursts upon you, sudden and appalling, at the proper time and place. In "Cloudesley," on the contrary, you foresee the termination as through a long vista, from the very commencement, and it is perhaps the strongest attestation to the surviving vigour of Mr. Godwin's genius, that he should, in despite of such a draw-back, have executed so very admirable an intellectual achievement.

THE PIRATE.

December 20, 1830.

THE scenery constitutes so essential a beauty in the Scottish novels : it is always drawn with such a masterly truth and visibility, that the attractiveness of each story must depend mainly on the locality selected for its development. In the "Pirate," the scene is laid in the Orkney Islands, that sterile, bleak and storm-beaten region, where nature never smiles, and only alternates from raging violence to lowering gloom. This I take to be a primary reason why this tale does not highly gratify. Another reason might be found in the awkward and perplexed denouement, were not this a common failing of Scott's, and one which the charms of his writing have so often triumphed over. Of the characters, the sorceress Norna is the principal, for the extent, variety and importance of her agency : but she is pourtrayed without consistency. After being made the arbiter by whose sovereign will all the knots which retard the progress of the incidents are relaxed, and all their complexities disentangled ; after her commands have had the force of decrees of fate, and her predictions the fulfilment of unerring prophecy, she is finally dismissed as a half-recovered, crack-brained maniac. She

is treated in short as her mystic kindred, the fortune-tellers are by their polished visitors : made use of to recover lost or missing valuables, and then consigned to contempt and ridicule. Cleveland is pourtrayed with such a rich vein of sterling, valuable qualities incrustated by vices which were rather the inevitable progeny of his fortune than the offspring of any inherent flaw of his nature, that we feel that poetical justice is more than satisfied in the rigour of his destiny, and that he might have been made repentant and happy without forfeiting his consistency or offending against any moral principle. The representative of the comic department is Claude Halcro, the bore of his acquaintance, and sometimes unfortunately, of the reader too, among the number. The two sisters in their similarity and contrast are charming creations : perhaps the most perfect specimens of feminine delicacy and juvenile loveliness that have been called into existence by the prolific wand of this modern Enchanter. There is a supplemental group of pilfering menials and humble sharpers who ply their amphibious vocation of plundering wrecks and cast-away corpses, in a very entertaining, and I believe, a very faithfully represented manner.

ITALY.—BY LADY MORGAN.

Rome, February 3, 1831.

I CONSIDER this to be an instructive and very amusing work upon the topics it embraces : presenting much of animated and correct delineation both in the scenic and portrait branches ; and possessing too, the higher merit of developing political speculations which have been since so literally fulfilled as to gain credit to their propounder for great sagacity both of observation and inference.

Having paid this fair tribute of praise to incomparably the best thing that this little buzzing, stinging insect, has ever produced ; and one to which in the frantic dotage at which she seems rather prematurely to have arrived, it would be quite hopeless to expect

anything equal hereafter, it must be admitted that "Italy," although in a degree much minor and more venial than its kindred, presents a large enough catalogue of the faults which authenticate its parentage—the pretension, falsehood and clap-trap which mark the foundry. It strikes one as a very remarkable fact, and well worth investigation, that notwithstanding that continental gallantry which allows so much scope to female license, the suspicions, the fears, and the odium of one and all of the Italian sovereigns seem to concentrate upon the head of this "petticoated politician;" while Forsyth, who flings his shafts with affected negligence, but with a venom of barb and an accuracy of aim to which the lady's feebler powers can make no approach, is allowed to vent his sarcasms against the national character and religion, unquestioned and uncensured. I shall attempt an explanation of the anomaly*. Lady Morgan attacks the religion of Italy only in the foul and unseemly masquerade in which it appears as an engine for civil oppression and mental degradation; while Forsyth assails it in its principles, its morality and very essence. If this be the true reason for the impunity of the one, and the condemnation of the other writer, how basely hollow and hypocritical are the pretences upon which "Italy" is declared an interdicted book—its alleged disrespectful treatment of the catholic church! I know the author *aliunde* to be as devoid of religion as she is of morality, and every other respectable quality, so that in defending her book upon this point, I am in no danger of "travelling out of the record," but without committing the paralogism of converting an exposure of the abuse of an institution into an argument against the institution itself, I do not see how her remarks upon the catholicity of Italy can be considered as an impeachment either open or covert of the creed itself. Great

* I cannot resist copying the following coincident explanation of a similar fact, which I have subsequently met with:— "You will think it strange that they should have allowed such *freedom* for many centuries to the Morgante, while the other day they confiscated the whole translation of the fourth Canto of Childe-Harold, and have persecuted Leoni, the translator ***** This shows how much more politics interest men in these parts than religion. Half a dozen invectives against tyranny confiscate Childe-Harold in a month; and eight and twenty cantos of quizzing monks and knights, and church government, are let loose for centuries." Notices of the life of Lord Byron. V. 3. (8^o ed.) P. 404. Letter 371.

pains are certainly taken to hold up to ridicule, and scorn, and abhorrence, the attempts which are palpably made in the Roman government to render religion the handmaid and support of despotism : to repress the aspirations after civil liberty by trying to confound the friend of political freedom with the atheistical anarchist ; and to make the offices of religion always conducive to the replenishment of its ministers' purses. That such is the policy of the Ecclesiastical State, no person can venture to deny. That in thus exhibiting the ore of pure religion incrustated with the alloy which human corruption has amalgamated with it : in demonstrating that it contains no inherent principles which ought to fetter the reason of man, or bow down his neck in contented slavery : in contrasting the pomp and pride of its ministers of the present day, as well at Canterbury as at Rome, with the lowliness and humility of its founders ; in exposing the frauds and artifices by which the charter of our salvation is perverted to purposes which desecrate and degrade it—in all this there is nothing incompatible with the faith and practices of a good Christian—nay, a good Roman Catholic. And surely it presents the Deity in the most amiable and consistent character, to consider him as willing that none of his gifts to his creatures should lie useless, but that man should be permitted the fullest exercise of *all* those faculties with which his Maker has endowed him. How shallow and unsubstantial the fear that in enriching man with all the acquirements his understanding is susceptible of, we are risking his fall into scepticism or free thinking ! This is the cant of those whose own " little learning, " and the fruits of its like limitation in others, have shown it as altogether " a dangerous thing. " The way to make a reasonable being acquiesce most submissively in those limitations which a superior power has assigned to his progress, is to make him feel how abundant is the field of enjoyment open to him within those barriers—how distantly his mind may expatiate and travel abroad, and with what rich stores it may return fraught. But churchmen can see, or will see, none of this. The converse of knowledge being power, is, that ignorance is weakness ; and to retain men in that weakness by which their own ascendancy is secured, they tell us to lie down and stay motionless, because if we stir abroad we shall meet, some thousand miles off, an insuperable barrier to obstruct our ulterior progress. Recent events have shown, and are showing, that the empire of brute power over reason is fast

crumbling into dust. I am not one of those who fear that the interests of religion will suffer in the change. On the contrary, believing it to be intrinsically pure and incorruptible, I hail the dispersion of the cloud which has so long obscured it, as the consummation which will show it in the glory and brightness of its truth.

CARDINAL PACCA'S MEMOIRS OF HIS CAPTIVITY.

Rome, February 16, 1831.

CANDID, enlightened and charitable, Cardinal Pacca has put forth a publication as much calculated to do honour to his own understanding and heart, and to gain respect and sympathy for the person and character of Pius VII., as it is to provoke abhorrence of the conduct of Bonaparte in the whole of his relations with this amiable prince. For unrighteous usurpation, for aggressive violence, for base duplicity, for fierce and unprovoked oppression of an aged and venerable monarch, I believe the pages of history, even in their records of the most lawless and sanguinary times, will be consulted in vain for anything like a parallel to the conduct of Napoleon in his attack upon the Roman State. And nothing in poetic embellishment was ever presented more striking in contrast than the demeanour of the Pontiff. Mild, placable and humble, he was ready to give up every thing personal to himself, and to retire to his monkish cell, to which he often looked as a harbour of safety and of rest; but when the interests of his stewardship came in question, neither persecution nor cajolery could wrest the smallest concession, until his ruthless enemy attained the refinement of cruelty of weakening his intellects by assailing his physical strength, having first withdrawn every friend and counsellor far from his side. If, now that both parties, the oppressor and the victim, are called to their final audit—and what a different reckoning have they to expect!—the calm unperturbed reader sees in some instances reason to lament the too great facility of Pius, and might wish for more of the forti-

tude of the Hildebrands and Gregories, yet upon a fair review of the circumstances, he will make due allowances for the occasional failings of an aged man, worn down by mental and corporal sufferings; under the absolute dominion of that being who almost seemed to realize his own impious vaunt, of being the *destined* to subjugate and reduce to his power all mankind, and who neither heard the voice of pity or remorse in the prosecution of his headlong career. Before this gigantic power Pacca never bowed. In power, when secretary of state; in captivity; at the risk even of life under the vigilance of spies and informers, this brave soldier of the church omitted no opportunity to corroborate the pope's faltering courage, and to animate him to a persevering resistance of all the violence and arts of his enemy. So notorious indeed was the nature and efficacy of Pacca's influence upon the mind of Pius, that whenever that pontiff evinced any symptoms of vigour or resolution; whenever a demand of extraordinary insolence and enormity—and the demands increased in insolence and enormity in proportion to the difficulties by which they were opposed,—provoked a refusal of unexpected vigour, all this was supposed to result from Pacca's influence and encouragement, and the severities and privations of his imprisonment were always augmented accordingly. The downfall of this modern scourge of religion with that same overwhelming rapidity which attended his elevation, and gave to both the same supernatural aspect: the restoration of his despised and trampled victim to the chair of St. Peter and supremacy over Christendom—these stupendous events, enough to awaken the most torpid to reflection, excite a fine train of religious meditation in the writer, and exhibit him as humble and grateful to a beneficent Providence, as he was inflexible and uncompromising to a criminal fellow-creature.

This memoir is not only curious for its facts, but for the record it presents of the author's sentiments upon some of those subjects upon which churchmen are more than ordinarily guarded. He debates the question in a way that proves a very unsettled opinion, as to whether the temporal power of the pope is conducive to the interests of religion; and more than intimates that the hierarchy would consist of better men and better christians, if it were reduced to circumstances more modelled on the primitive times. In any priest of any country, those sentiments would be acknowledged as

proofs of a liberality much superior to his order; but in a Roman priest, and a Cardinal, they evince as extraordinary a reach of mind in the detection, as of honesty and courage in the exposure of abuses.

Were the work at hand, I should gladly enrich my notices with a compendium of its curious historical narrative. Without having recourse to it, I can only attempt a vague and useless critique which has already extended to a sufficient length.

EUSTACE'S CLASSICAL TOUR IN ITALY.

Rome, March 10, 1831.

AN educated, English catholic, in these descriptive words, probably combines the best requisites for giving an impartial and enlightened representation of Italy. Belonging to a country where the arts of government and civilization are carried to their highest perfection, he travels abroad provided with the best existing standard whereby to measure the advances of the foreign country in social institutions. As a catholic he is qualified to see and judge of the great lever of religion with fairness and discrimination; not like the sectary, confounding the essence and the accessory, the form and the substance, into a unity of tasteless gaud, and idolatrous pageant; but separating what in catholicity must be everywhere immutable and alike, from what takes its conventional hue from manners, climate and government, he not only reasons rightly as to religion itself, but derives from its ceremonial a clear insight into the state of the co-existing secular institutions. These advantages are united by Mr. Eustace, and a corresponding result produced. He is to be sure a priest, but I think whatever bias might have ensued from his profession, is amply corrected by the liberality of his principles and the philosophic moderation of his temper; so that where the French are kept out of view, Mr. Eustace evinces an amiable and tolerant spirit, and prefers claims of the highest sanction as an authority upon the state of Italy, past and present. In a professedly "classical" tour, great latitude of reference to the literature of ancient Rome is justly allowable, and where he has confined

himself to the poets and historians of Rome's palmy times, to shed the superadded beauty of their poetry upon the lovely scenery of their soil, or establishing by their topographical accuracy, the identity of some monument fraught with historic or poetic recollections, we feel nothing but admiration and delight, and Virgil or Horace may be transcribed almost wholly in those *dissecta membra*, and give fresh pleasure in this connexion with the scenes of their lives—the locality and the poet thus illustrating each other. But to transcribe lengthy quotations from Silius Italicus, or Statius, or some of the *minores gentium*, merely to settle the destination of some shapeless ruin, or ascertain the exact spot of some forgotten battle, or unimportant historical transaction, without giving super-added interest to the objects themselves, this is surely something of that unseasonable display of learning that constitutes pedantry, and sheds around it all the opaque dulness with which pedantry is chargeable. In every passage relating to the French, (and often as they naturally arise, the author needlessly multiplies them,) forgetting all the calmness and composure befitting his task and his calling, he breaks out into the most unmeasured lengths of indignant, contumelious crimination. Had this vituperation been applied only to the admitted transgressions of that petulant people—their sacrileges, their impiety, their plunder—the catalogue is full enough;—or even to their acts of questionable benefit, as their intrusion of a garden or a promenade to break the solemnity of some scene of recollections, it might have been pardoned. But where desert is undeniable, praise should not be withheld, especially after unsparing condemnation has been inflicted; and to despatch the two great passes of the Alps, the completion of the cathedral of Milan, the lighting of Rome, the disarming the common people of their knives, the embellishments of Naples—to glance slightly and coldly over these and so many other permanent and beneficial monuments of French conquest in Italy, is to dishonour the author himself and not the objects of his spleen. But neither does he stop here. The celebrated story of the “Last Supper” at Milan being pierced with bullets is, I believe, admitted to be a pure fiction, and many of the accompanying instances of French destructiveness to objects of art, nothing better. Indeed the French have rather to answer to Italy for a too engrossing love of the fine arts, than for a barbarian mal-treatment of them. After this irre-

missible fault of want of veracity, the great blemish of the "Classical tour" is the certain level uniformity which pervades it : an elaborateness of detail upon objects of insignificance as well as on those of importance, which divests the latter of their due prominence and foreground, and gives to all the descriptions the greatest vagueness and want of distinct imagery to be found in almost any work I ever read. Indeed the production is on the whole of too ponderous and erudite a cast to become a popular traveller's manual. Its great merit is its tone of discussing the catholic religion, in which it is judicious, liberal and persuasive : holding firmly by what is evincible by reason, and frankly relinquishing all that encumbrance which is either contrary to pure taste, or prejudicial to rational piety. As a graphical delineation, the book is below mediocrity : as an illustration of modern Italy by the literature of ancient, it is too elaborate and prolix—as an account of the changes effected by French influence, it sinks into a factious declamation, void even of consistency and utterly unworthy of citation.

DON JUAN.

Rome, March 11, 1831.

Ex uno disce omnes. Lord Byron has infused so much of himself into all his writings, that to analyze one of them anticipates the commentary upon every other. The merit of "Don Juan," and it is a pre-eminent one, is that it is not only the looking-glass reflecting its image in one particular posture and expression of countenance, but has the effect of a gallery of portraits, like Zoffani's of Garrick, presenting their original in every variety of character, temper, and costume. The spoiled-child, the plant blighted through the neglect of early culture, is always apparent. Moody, sarcastic, capricious, meditative and exalted, by sudden starts and abrupt transitions, one stanza of this curious poetic olio—this medley of all strains, from the exalting anthem to the vulgar jig, epitomises sometimes its author's entire character in the music of that *fine instrument out of tune*, whose Æolian discords are yet often so exquisite, that we would be loath to exchange them for more methodical harmony. In contemplating those transcripts of a mighty

genius under a warp and bias, one is often tempted to ask—inconclusive as the speculation must ever be—if Lord Byron had been differently trained; if he had been taught that sensibility to religious impressions, which is the purest source of the sublime: if the gall and wormwood he distils against his species had been sweetened into that indulgent perception of human infirmity which constitutes the essence of humour, would his reputation, or rather his celebrity, (for as to reputation properly so called, there could have been no question,) been a gainer or a sufferer by the change. With every disposition to render justice to the pre-eminence of Lord Byron's talents, to admit that in the portraiture of vehement emotion he has never been surpassed, I am persuaded nevertheless that the singularity of his character and the uncommon events of his history, have contributed greatly to his popularity, not merely as accessories, by conferring an interest upon the man apart from the writer, but directly, by furnishing the materials from which he moulded all his poetry. Had he trodden a more beaten track, he would have been measured with rivals and superiors, and though perhaps a better poet, would have occupied a smaller space and a briefer era in the recollection of posterity. Could he have entered the lists in the sublimity of gospel inspiration with Milton, or successfully contended for the palm of moral wit with Pope, or humour with Goldsmith or even Crabbe? Probably not. But he is fortunate in suggesting no comparisons: looking inward he found an intellectual organisation of vigorous and peculiar structure, corroded and undermined by neglect and ill usage, the development of which generated a style striking for its novelty and truth, and which he has perfected perhaps to its highest attainable refinement. If the internal evidence of Lord Byron's heroes being self-delineations were not sufficient, the crowd of lights which have been posthumously shed upon his character amply establish it. The same morose estrangement from mankind in the mass, coexistent with the finest susceptibility to the claims of individual helplessness or distress; the same disregard to conventional regulations, and unresisting obedience to the sway of passion or caprice, are equally discernible in the transcript and the original, and render the one an apt illustration of the other. Thus, something like the interest of autobiography was superadded to the charm of exquisite poetry, and the novelty of an author canvassing popular suffrage, like Coriolanus, by ostenta-

tiously proclaiming his contempt for it, still further heightening the zest, the combined result of those various attractions has been to secure for Lord Byron the first place among all contemporaries for personal and literary fame.

"Don Juan" is not a composition suited to extracts of a compressable size; and to my former notices of the several cantos as they appeared respectively, I have appended some specimens of a few of its multifarious styles. I therefore add nothing here.

VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

Naples, April 25, 1831.

If one were desirous to produce examples of the unexpected effects generated by external circumstances in the human character, it would be difficult to find more striking instances in opposite kinds than the author of the "Vicar of Wakefield" and the one previously under notice. With greater reason than almost any other writer of any age for gratitude to fortune and to his contemporaries; to the one for conferring rank and affluence; to the others for exalting him to a pinnacle of unquestioned supremacy, never before awarded by contemporary suffrage except perhaps in the case of Voltaire; Lord Byron lived and died a morbid, splenetic misanthrope; seeing nothing in his fellow-creatures but qualities to provoke hatred and contempt, and using the very altar which their worship had erected to his deified genius, either as the shrine from which to hurl his anathemas against them, or as a footstool from whence to spurn their too eager approaches. Poor Goldsmith, on the contrary, from his garret, or his spunging house,—fresh from contact with the dun or the catchpole, in that delightful imagination which perhaps compensated all his sorrows, beholds only visions of rural contentment and primeval bliss; and invests his fellow-creatures with those attributes only which conciliate pity and tenderness. Yet this was not in him the result of that indiscriminating good-nature which we are apt to undervalue as a weakness. The author who could paint the foibles of man with such fidelity of pencil, could easily have deepened his

colours to give a tinge of equal reality to their crimes; and the history of George in this charming tale, generally admitted to be a sketch of his own, proves how keenly alive he was to

“ The spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes. ”

That Dr. Goldsmith chose to delineate mankind rather as he wished it than as he found it, almost every reader will esteem fortunate. The satirist may amuse us and we may admire the skill with which he carves the materials he prepares for our repast; but his seasoning of acids and stimulants is too high to be nutritious. Whereas the writer of benevolence and humour supplies the true mental aliment—that by which we feel at once refreshed and invigorated, and to which we can quickly return with a keen relish and improved digestion.

CORINNE, OU L'ITALIE.

Naples, May 14, 1831.

THIS first introduction of Madame de Staël to fame, placed, once for all, her reputation upon the basis on which it will go down to posterity. It exhibited her as a writer capable at once of thinking profoundly and feeling intensely. With the single exception of Mr. Burke, there is no modern who seems to have united the imagination of the poet with the abstractions of the philosopher, and made each adjutory and decorative to the other, in the same degree as the author of “ Corinne. ” The skill evinced in the design and structure of such a work are hardly inferior to the talent lavished upon its execution. Its plan was one that freely admitted the most unrestrained profusion of sentiments and opinions. In the character of a highly gifted *improvisatrice*, acting as the guide to and expositor of all the treasures of ancient and modern Rome, there is obviously nothing of disquisition upon history, politics and the fine arts which would not appropriately find its place; and accordingly the dissertations, the improvisations, all the sentiments and opinions uttered

by Corinne, are received with the stamp and authority belonging to the recognised judgments of the writer. It was perhaps for the achievement of this great advantage that somewhat of the dramatic interest of the heroine is sacrificed: she is brought too prominently and theatrically forward to please the taste of, I should think, any country; most certainly too much so for acceptance in that which Madame de Staël seems most to respect—England. In refusing his sympathy to such a character as Corinne, an Englishman does not only conform to a national taste, but judges according to the award of experience; because we find everywhere that the duties of a wife and mother are always fulfilled in the inverse proportion to the love of display and popular applause in the individual. Neither can the praise be given to this work of presenting a very interesting hero. We feel throughout that Oswald is a being of too inferior an order to justify the enthusiastic attachment of Corinne, and when he marries Lucilla, we shrewdly suspect him to have been more moved thereto by the attractions of youth and freshness, than by obedience to parental wishes. Lucilla is however a very happy impersonation of the idea, perhaps, more than the actual truth of an Englishwoman; and the Count D'Erbach an admirable specimen of the light-hearted Frenchman of the old régime, whose very virtues were all instinctive and uninfluenced by reflection.

“ Corinne ” is however less to be considered as a tale of fiction than as a critical essay and an analysis of impressions. It is on the whole not only the best commentary that has yet appeared, but the best that is ever likely to appear on Italy; because it is hardly to be expected that a writer so qualified will again devote his talents to this now threadbare theme. I think it is better adapted to revive and fix the impressions derived from an Italian tour than to precede them. The reason of which is, that Madame de Staël's enthusiasm being far more exalted and sustained than that of most of her readers, has led her to draw an overwrought and somewhat fanciful picture both of Italian nature and art; and a flattered resemblance, though perhaps the most pleasing after a knowledge and approbation of the original, will infallibly create disappointment and alienation, if it precedes it.

I make a short extract, but yet sufficient to mark that style of combined metaphysics and poetry with which all the author's works are stamped.

“ Quand on contemple un beau site dans le nord, le climat qui se fait sentir trouble toujours un peu le plaisir qu'on pourrait goûter. C'est comme un son faux dans un concert que ces petites sensations de froid et d'humidité qui détournent plus ou moins votre attention de ce que vous voyez ; mais en approchant de Naples vous éprouvez un bien-être si parfait, une si grande amitié de la nature pour vous, que rien n'altère les sensations agréables qu'elle vous cause. Tous les rapports de l'homme dans nos climats sont avec la société. La nature, dans les pays chauds, met en relation avec les objets extérieurs, et les sensations s'y répandent doucement au dehors. Ce n'est pas que le midi n'ait aussi sa mélancolie : dans quels lieux la destinée de l'homme ne produit-elle pas cette impression ! mais il n'y a dans cette mélancolie ni mécontentement, ni anxiété, ni regret. Ailleurs, c'est la vie qui, telle qu'elle est, ne suffit pas aux facultés de l'âme ; ici, ce sont les facultés de l'âme qui ne suffisent pas à la vie, et la surabondance des sensations inspire une rêveuse indolence dont on se rend à peine compte en l'éprouvant. ”

Vol. 2. P. 191-2.

FORSYTH'S ITALY.

Naples, May 22, 1831.

IF turning the leaves of books were effectually reading them, I might take credit to myself for having pretty extensively employed the labours of more qualified persons to assist my observations in my recent abode. Eustace, Lady Morgan, Corinne and now Forsyth have each claimed their record in these pages, yet how little of their information has clung to my memory !

This tour is introduced by a sensible and amiably written preface, from the pen of Mr. Forsyth's brother, containing a sketch of the author's history and of the circumstances under which he published his remarks : these were of a kind to disarm much heavier criticism than the clever work they originated could in any case merit, and to bespeak much respect and commiseration for the author. Mr. Forsyth performed his travels in Italy at the period when the fugitive

and delusive peace of Amiens excited a general migration from England to the continent, and was an early victim to that rancorous policy in the French ruler which marked the outbreak of hostilities, having been arrested on his return homewards, and detained in captivity until the general goal delivery of Waterloo. Having understood that in his affected protection of literature, the tyrant in some instances showed favour to authors, Mr. Forsyth gave the present volume to the press, in, I believe, the eighth or ninth year of his bondage, and of course at a still greater distance of time from that at which the impressions it conveys were struck. Considering how unfitted a mind depressed by anxiety and disappointment, and acting on a frame of feeble structure at best, was to render justice to its own powers, we ought rather to admire the excellence of this its emanation, than to expect it to have been more faultless, especially as the entire bears the traces of the circumstances under which it was composed. The haste of its construction is not only apparent in the abrupt, fragment-like manner into which all its information is broken, but also in the selection of topics, which seem to have been inserted as they presented themselves to the author's recollection and without reference either to the order of their original suggestion, or to their intrinsic importance. Above all, we recognise Mr. Forsyth's peculiar situation in the splenetic, sarcastic vein which he opens on almost every occasion. Where a spot or a monument has been especially consecrated to classical associations, he desecrates it with an alacrity to which ridicule, learning, argument and all the weapons of dialectics are auxiliary. The catholic religion, that whetstone of wits and mockers, obtains its full share of his sarcasm, and he has accordingly been forced into the lists as the antagonist of Eustace. But besides that the present author never saw the "Classical Tour," his style of attack is too dissimilar to Eustace's defensive tactics to allow of their ever being champions in the same arena. Eustace always discusses with gravity and sometimes with tediousness. He is uniformly calm, and candid and discursive. Forsyth never enters into a dissertation; he aims as he flies, and does not even turn aside to see if his shot has told. A jeer or an epigram disposes at once of a moot point on which Eustace has expended a whole chapter.

The editor, with fraternal pride, regrets that this tour was ever written, so inferior does he esteem it to his brother's capabilities.

No doubt we are warranted in supposing that under favourable circumstances the work would have assumed a proportionably improved form. Yet perhaps full allowance has been made by the public for this; and it is to be remembered that the finished picture does not always fulfil the promise of the sketch.

I extract a passage on the populace of Naples.

“ If Naples be ‘ a paradise inhabited by devils,’ I am sure it is by merry devils. Even the lowest class enjoy every blessing that can make the animal happy—a delicious climate, high spirits, a facility of satisfying every appetite, a conscience which gives no pain, a convenient ignorance of their duty, and a church which ensures heaven to every ruffian that has faith. Here tatters are not misery, for the climate requires little covering; filth is not misery to them who are born to it; and a few fingerings of macaroni can wind up the rattling machine for the day.

“ They are perhaps the only people on earth that do not pretend to virtue. On their own stage they suffer the Neapolitan of the drama to be always a rogue. If detected in theft, a lazaroni will ask you, with impudent surprise, how could you possibly expect a poor man to be an angel. Yet what are these wretches? Why, men whose persons might stand as a model to a sculptor; whose gestures strike you with the commanding energy of a savage; whose language, gaping and broad as it is when kindled by passion, bursts into oriental metaphor; whose ideas are cooped indeed, within a narrow circle—but a circle in which they are invincible. If you attack them there, you are beaten. Their exertion of soul, their humour, their fancy, their quickness of argument, their address at flattery, their rapidity of utterance, their pantomime and grimace, none can resist but a lazaroni himself.

“ These gifts of nature are left to luxuriate unrepressed by education, by any notions of honesty, or habits of labour. Hence their ingenuity is wasted in crooked little views. Intent on the little piddling game of cheating only for their own day, they let the great chance lately go by, and left a few immortal patriots to stake all for posterity, and to lose it.”

P. 561-2-3.

VITA DI ALFIERI.

Naples, May 24, 1831.

WHETHER there be really anything answerable to our idea of genius; any inherent constitution of mind so fraught with the germ which fructifies into eminence, as to force its growth upwards through every opposition to its development; or whether the mighty achievements which we ascribe to original genius are the result of that constant and vigorous exertion propelled by a temperament of energy alone; in a word, whether genius be a primary cause or merely an effect, will be a question perhaps unresolved by all the analyses we shall ever be able to trace of the mental structure of its supposed possessors.

Perhaps in the whole range of ancient and modern illustrious men, whose domestic lives have been transmitted to us, there never was one that rose to eminence amid the counteraction of so many causes to extinguish totally the intellectual fire, as Victor Alfieri. Born in a small state; belonging to that aristocratic class who in Italy are especially doomed to inaction and frivolity; the inheritor of an affluent fortune; consigned for the precious years of boyhood to an institution where the slight pretences made to instruction were so ill-judged as well as ineffectual, as only to present learning in all the absurd and repulsive forms of pedantry; early abandoned by the removal or negligence of his relatives, to the uncontrolled dominion of his own violent passions, there appeared nothing wanting to render Alfieri a compound of the most odious and most contemptible vices of his station and country, and up to his twenty-fifth year his character seems to have afforded little promise of anything better than the natural fruit of such a seed and culture. Yet such was the extraordinary energy of the mind thus warped and neglected, that at this period of life, when the majority even of the most happily circumstanced give rein to dissipation and pleasure, Alfieri applied himself to the commencement of his education; and, as a first step, to learn the Latin language from its very rudiments. Having about the same pe-

riori sketched the plan and part of the dialogue of his first tragedy, he found himself so perfectly ignorant of the Italian language in its purity, as to determine, with that surprising energy which seems to have been the distinctive feature of his mind, to commence the double task of learning and unlearning with equal completeness. A removal to Florence was effected as a consequence of this plan. The intercourse of his youth having been maintained either in the mongrel dialect of Piedmont, or in equally barbarous French, in order to qualify himself for tasting the Italian literature from its purer sources, he resolved to evacuate his mind of whatever could vitiate his literary palate, and in this way forsook at once and for ever the use both of Piedmontese and French. The ardour with which he pursued those first studies could not fail to produce a corresponding effect, and we find him encouraged by previous success to attempt the conquest of Greek also, to the deciphering the alphabet of which he betook himself in his forty-seventh year ! Thus he not only broke down the formidable barriers that opposed his progress, but in the wholesome labour requisite for overcoming them, exercised and hardened his faculties for those original tasks on which he hoped to establish his renown. Thus Alfieri exhibits an instance without parallel, of a writer having attained the supremacy in the dramatic literature of a country before his sixtieth year, and being unacquainted with the language of his triumphs at twenty four. How interesting, how inappreciably interesting to all persons *of all ages*, would be the resolution of the question upon which I have speculated at the outset of this article ! Was this eminence attained by *volition* merely, or was that volition itself only the irrepressible heavings of the subterranean fire struggling for an outlet ?

The life of Alfieri, independent of its paramount interest as a literary curiosity, does not present many very entertaining incidents, nor does his character assume that loveable form which engages our sympathy and regards in all its trials. Up to the period of his connexion with Madame D'Albany, his sole occupation seems to have been a restless locomotion, roaming without object or profit from country to country, with the uneasiness of a spirit to which its befitting vocation was still unrevealed. That connexion, which is in this work involved in mystery, gave a permanency to his residence and a regularity to his habits of such inestimable benefit to his literary pursuits, that in ascribing as he does, all his success to the influence

of that lady, he speaks probably more truth than the language of fondness often conveys.

Alfieri was born at Asti in Piedmont in 1749, and died at Florence in 1803.

I extract the particulars of his first acquaintance with the Countess D'Albany.

“ Fin dall' estate innanzi, ch' io avea come dissi passato intero a Firenze, mi era senza ch'io'l volessi occorsa più volte agli occhi una gentilissima e bella signora, che per esservi anch' essa forestiera e distinta, non era possibile di non vederla e osservarla; e più ancora impossibile, che osservata e veduta non piacesse ella sommamente a ciascuno. Con tutto ciò, ancorchè gran parte dei signori di Firenze, e tutti i forestieri di nascita da lei capitassero, io immerso negli studj e nella melanconia, ritroso e selvaggio per indole, e tanto più sempre intento a sfuggire tra il bel sesso quelle che più aggradevoli e belle mi pareano, io perciò in quell' estate innanzi non mi feci punto introdurre nella di lei casa; ma nei teatri e passeggi mi era accaduto di vederla spessissimo. L'impression prima me n' era rimasta negli occhi, e nella mente ad un tempo, piacevolissima. Un dolce focoso negli occhi nerissimi accoppiatosi (che raro addiviene) con candissima pelle e biondi capelli, davano alla di lei bellezza un risalto, di cui difficile era di non rimanere colpito e conquiso. Età di anni venticinque; molta propensione alle bell' arti e alle lettere; indole d'oro; e, malgrado gli agj di cui abbondava, penose e dispiacevoli circostanze domestiche, che poco la lasciavano essere, come il dovea, avventurata e contenta. Troppi pregi eran questi, per affrontarli.

“ In quell' autunno, dunque sendomi da un mio conoscente proposto più volte d'introdurmivi, io credendomi forte abbastanza mi arrischiai d'accostarmivi; ne molto andò ch'io mi trovai, quasi senza avvedermene, preso. Tutta via titubando io ancora tra il sì e il no di questa fiamma novella, nel Dicembre feci una scorsa a Roma per le poste a cavallo; viaggio pazzo e strapazzatissimo, che non mi fruttò altro che d'aver fatto il Sonetto di Roma pernottando in una bettolaccia di Baccano, dove non mi riuscì mai di poter chiuder occhio. L'andare, lo stare, e il tornare furono circa dodici giorni. Rividi nelle due passate da Siena l'amico Gori, il quale non mi sconsigliò da quei nuovi ceppi, in cui già era più che mezzo allacciato ;

onde il ritorno in Firenze me li ribadì ben tosto per sempre. Ma l'approssimazione di questa mia quarta ed ultima febbre del cuore si veniva felicemente per me manifestando con sintomi assai diversi dalle tre prime. In quelle io non m'era ritrovato allora agitato da una passione dell'intelletto, la quale contrappesando e frammischiandosi a quella del cuore venisse a formare (per esprimermi col poeta) un misto incognito indistinto, che meno d'alquanto impetuoso e fervente, ne riusciva però più profondo, sentito, e durevole. Tale fu la fiamma che da quel punto in poi si andò a poco a poco ponendo in cima d'ogni mio affetto e pensiero, e che non si spegnerà oramai più in me se non colla vita. Avvistomi in capo a due mesi che la mia vera Donna era quella, poichè in vece di ritrovare in essa, come in tutte le volgari donne, un ostacolo alla gloria letteraria, un disturbo alle utili occupazioni, ed un rimpicciolimento direi di pensieri, io ci ritrovava e sprone e conforto ed esempio ad ogni bell'opera; io, conosciuto e apprezzato un sì raro tesoro, mi diedi allora perdutatissimamente a lei. E non errai per certo, poichè più di dodici anni dopo, mentr'io sto scrivendo queste chiacchiere, entrato oramai nella sgradita stagione dei disinganni, vieppiù sempre di essa mi accendo quanto più vanno per legge di tempo scemando in lei quei non suoi pregi passeggeri della caduca bellezza. Ma in lei si innalza, addolcisce, e migliora di giorno in giorno il mio animo; ed ardirò dire e creder lo stesso di essa, la quale in me forse appoggia e corrobora il suo. ”

Vol. 2. P. 60 -1-2. Anno 1777.

MÉMOIRES DU GÉNÉRAL RAPP.

Naples, June 7, 1831.

THIS work derives its best recommendation from the personal character of its author, who preserving always the frankness of his German origin, appears to have been one of the very few persons in close connexion with Napoleon who neither flattered him in his prosperity, betrayed him in his reverses, nor reviled him after his downfall. Commencing the career of arms as a soldier of fortune,

Rapp's first signal promotion was his appointment as aide-de-camp to General Desaix. From that sentiment of personal regard which Bonaparte evinced perhaps in the single instance of Desaix, the two aides-de-camp of that general were, at his death, transferred to the consular staff, and neither in the case of Duroc nor the author of these memoirs, had their benefactor reason to lament the posthumous tribute he thus paid to friendship. In his now exalted station, Rapp appears to have shared in all the campaigns from that of Marengo to that of 1812 inclusive, with the singular ill-luck of receiving a wound in almost every action in which he participated. On the retreat from Russia, he was placed in the government of Dantzic, where he sustained a close siege of almost a year's duration with a bravery and constancy proof against the attacks of a superior force from without, and equally so against destitution and mutiny from within. When longer defence became hopeless, Rapp signed a capitulation with the Prince of Wirtemberg, the Russian general, which the Emperor Alexander refused to ratify, and by this means Rapp, who felt it impossible to resume his defence, was with the rest of the garrison made prisoners of war, instead of being, as stipulated in the surrender, allowed to return to their respective homes. After his liberation at the general peace, he appears neither to have been forward in giving his adhesion to the Bourbons, nor to have ever retracted it when once given. In proof of this the memoir recites verbatim a curious conversation between Bonaparte and his ex-aide-de-camp, after the return of the former from Elba, in which he good-humouredly sifts his old adherent as to the conduct he would have adopted had he been sent to oppose the march to Paris. Rapp sustains his part of this trying scrutiny with judgment and firmness; and thus appears to have performed one of the last public acts of his life, which terminated soon after the second restoration, from the effects, it is said, of his numerous wounds.

The only part of the work perfectly new to me was the narrative of the siege of Dantzic, and that I did not find interesting: indeed the details of sieges never are so to me. They exhibit warfare in all its horrors, unrelieved by the stir and activity which animate the campaign and the pitched battle. It is easy to conceive why it should be an inflexible rule of discipline that no soldier should abandon his post except from utter inability to maintain it. But that cannot

hinder our being struck with the enormous disproportion between the evil of sacrificing thousands of wretches to famine and pestilence, and the contingent benefit of maintaining for a few days additional, the possession of a heap of ruins against an assailing enemy.

This volume afforded nothing extractable. Its style, though easy and perspicuous, presents nothing remarkable detached from its matter, which as I have said, is now familiar to me and every one.

LA HARPE.

CORRESPONDANCE LITTÉRAIRE.

Naples, June 29, 1831.

THE letters which constitute this correspondence extend through the space of six octavo volumes, and are all addressed, (with three or four exceptions to a Polish count,) to the Emperor Paul of Russia, then Grand Duke. They comprise a critical review of all the contemporary French literature; that is from the year 1778 to 1790—copious details upon theatricals in their various departments of new or revived pieces, the débuts or retirement of actors, and the plan and economy of the managements. M. La Harpe is always an unsparing censor, and being chiefly distinguished as a dramatic writer himself, not only discusses this department with most zeal, but on the principle that

“Through all the employments of life,
Each neighbour abuses his brother;”

assails the reputations and performances of all his fellow dramatists with most unsparing acrimony. Dorat and Seguin are never mentioned but with invective, and Ducis, although his province as a translator and adapter only, saved him from the entire responsibility of his dramas, scarcely receives a slighter castigation. Marmontel

is praised for some of those inaugural discourses with which the French Academy pompously encumbered their proceedings, but as a dramatic writer he is denied almost all merit. To this universal censure, there is but one exception, and that it will easily be conjectured, is Voltaire; whom no Frenchman could dare to condemn without incurring the charge of the only heresy he would dread:—heresy in point of national taste. The respect paid to Voltaire himself is however rather to his former than his contemporary excellence; for he is treated throughout as a setting sun, and all his later performances placed in unfavourable contrast with those of his maturity. All this little jealousy of rival craft is however quite bearable and even amusing. Besides, although the closing half of the eighteenth century produced a great constellation of eminent names in France, there were none of them of such admitted supremacy as to have been above the imputation of faults, so that M. La Harpe, in following the promptings of a splenetic spirit, could find no want of aliment for his tastes without materially transgressing truth or justice. But when Zoilus like, he must have his Homer to carp and rail at; when not contented with the ample field which contemporary and compatriot authorship afforded him, he must have recourse to England, and violate profanely and impiously the hallowed ashes of Shakespeare, then indeed is the English reader tempted to fling the book from him with indignation and scorn, and to retort on its author with increased bitterness all the charges of ignorance, presumption and bad taste which he so unsparingly flings about him on others. Without knowledge to understand one scene of this divine poet, or taste to relish him if he did, this impudent dogmatist assails the English bard for his irregularity and the want of methodical structure in his dramas. But when was anything really grand or sublime in nature, regular or symmetrical? Genius in the intellectual world, like the miracle or the phenomenon in the natural one, asserts itself by boldly transgressing the established order, and seizing our admiration as much by the eccentricity as the elevation of its flight. To measure Shakspeare by rules laid down by Aristotle and followed by Racine and Voltaire, is something like measuring a pass of the Alps by the line and compass plan of Le Nôtre's gardens. To read one line of M. La Harpe's criticisms after such strictures as these, requires no ordinary command of temper or stock of patience, and yet the work, though too long and unvaried both in phrase and sentiment,

will repay a thorough perusal. The author writes his own language with perspicuity and grace, and gives an interesting literary summary of a period which combined the names of Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Diderot, Marmontel, Condillac, with numerous others of inferior mark. A sketch of each author's history is generally prefixed to the reviewal of his work, and as all falsehood would be open to prompt detection, I presume the facts may be relied upon as generally accurate. The account of the literary career of the most strange of all eccentrics, Beaumarchais, is very lively and curious, and that of the apotheosis of that hoary miscreant Voltaire, proves how ripe the Parisians then were for their subsequent apotheosis of the strumpet representative of the *Goddess of Reason*.

The following remarks upon the literary effects of the Revolution appeared to be worthy of preservation.

« La révolution, qui offrira quelque jour de grands sujets, et ouvrira de nouvelles routes au talent, n'a encore fourni que de misérables ressources à la médiocrité, qui s'empresse d'autant plus de s'emparer de tout, qu'elle ne sait tirer parti de rien. Des barbouilleurs courent après les sujets qui prêtent à la liberté de penser, et qu'elle seule permet de traiter; mais ils ne songent pas que la liberté de penser et d'écrire n'en donnent pas la faculté. Ainsi l'on vient de mettre au Théâtre Français et à celui des Variétés, l'horrible aventure de la famille *Calas*. Les auteurs, comme on s'en doute bien, ne se sont embarrassés ni de la difficulté de mettre un procès criminel sur la scène, ni des moyens de tempérer l'horreur du sujet. Ils n'y ont vu que la misérable facilité de déclamer contre le fanatisme et contre notre ancienne jurisprudence, et de flatter la multitude aux dépens des prêtres et des parlemens : c'est aujourd'hui *le pont aux dnes*. Les deux pièces, quoique détestables de tout point, ont été applaudies; mais aussi, quoique applaudies, elles ont été abandonnées dès la seconde représentation, surtout celle des Français. Il est vrai que c'est encore la plus mauvaise des deux. L'auteur M. *Laya*, qui avait déjà donné *les Dangers de l'opinion*, drame extrêmement médiocre et très-mal conçu, a imaginé dans son *Calas*, de faire du capitoul *David*, un franc scélérat, suborneur de témoins et digne de la corde : c'était dénaturer le sujet. On peut juger, par ce seul trait, de la force d'un auteur.

« Une autre ressource à la portée de tout le monde , c'est de faire des espèces de pantomimes de certaines actions qui par elles-mêmes n'ont rien de propre au théâtre , quoique fort belles dans l'histoire , comme le dévouement de *d'Assas* et celui du jeune *Desailles* dans l'affaire de Nancy. On a représenté l'un et l'autre en un acte , sous le titre de *Traits historiques* ; car les auteurs eux-mêmes n'osent pas donner des titres dramatiques à ces sortes de canevas qui sont en effet des monstres sans nom. Mais l'appareil militaire, les bonnets de grenadiers , les baïonnettes , les mots de liberté et de patriotisme font tout passer pour le moment. On n'oserait siffler une sottise patriotique. »

Lettre 286 ; An 1790.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

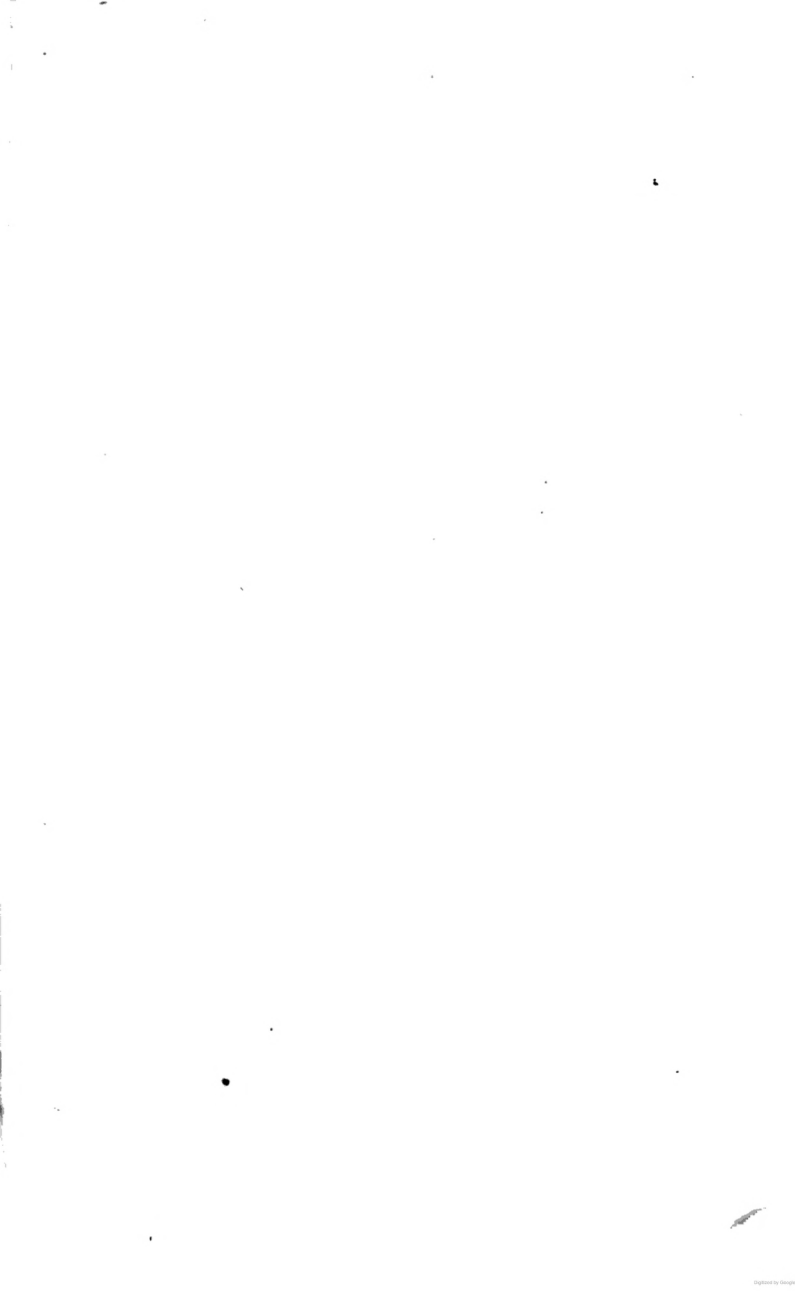
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